

THE STABLE HANDBOOK



BY T. F. DALE

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JOHN A. SEAVERNS

John A. Seaver 1948

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THE COUNTRY HANDBOOKS

EDITED BY HARRY ROBERTS

The Stable Handbook



A TYPICAL HUNTER'S HEAD



A USEFUL PROVINCIAL HUNTER

*The Stable
Handbook
By T. F. Dale*



*John Lane, The Bodley Head
London and New York MDCCCXVII*

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Prefatory Note

THE text of this book speaks for itself, but a few words may be useful with regard to the illustrations.

The Stable Handbook is professedly a book for men of moderate means. Why, then, it may be asked, illustrate it with portraits of horses and ponies of a class which must be beyond the means of the majority of readers. My answer is this: These pictures are object lessons, just as the prize-winner at the show is intended to be an object lesson to breeders. To train the eye to judge of horses none but the very best models should be set before it. The reader who will examine the illustrations will be able to see for himself what are the best models approved by experienced judges, and having educated his eye to these, be better qualified to judge of what he wants when he comes to buy for himself. These pictures will also enable us to distinguish between mere prettiness and useful points. Then they will serve to bring before us the different types that are useful for the varying work to which a horse may be put, and this will steady our judgment when buying. If we wish for a general purpose horse, one that we can ride or

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drive, we shall choose one that approximates more or less to the type of the animal fitted for the work we want. If we want, for example, a horse to ride, and only occasionally for harness, we should look out for the useful hunter type, or the polo and riding pony sort ; if, on the other hand, we want a horse chiefly for harness, and only for occasional saddle work, we should lay most stress on harness qualities.

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The Stable Handbook

The *STABLE HANDBOOK*

CHAPTER I.—*The Stable*

THE first thing the would-be horse keeper has to provide is a stable. A horse may live, or at least exist, in an unsuitable stable, but he will never thrive or do all the work we require, or of which he is capable, in one which lacks the three primary requisites of space, air, and cleanliness.

Thus the fittings must be such as will enable the groom to observe the last precept without undue labour. While I would never allow a man to scamp his work, I should always endeavour to make him feel that I was willing, in every legitimate way, to save him unnecessary trouble. We are not dealing now with those larger establishments where there is a man and a boy to do everything. Our groom may have work in the garden, may help in the kennel or the poultry yard, may look after the cow, or may assist in the house. There will in many cases be riding-boots to clean, and in not a few houses water to be pumped up.

Thus in the fittings of our stable we have to consider not only necessity, but also convenience

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and the saving of labour. In a small country house we shall generally find two kinds of stable. First, the builder's idea of a two-stall stable for what he would call "a villa residence suitable to a retired gentleman." Such stables generally have every fault that a stable can have. Brick floors, with a drain in the middle of the stall or loose box, is the worst and most usual fault. Cheap mangers of varnished wood and a hay rack half way up the wall. Then they are dark and stuffy, the air space is deficient, and yet, as the work is not too good, they are draughty in the wrong place. The other kind, and far better, is where the stables have been constructed out of cart stables or outhouses, and still better is where we find simply outhouses—it little matters how rough if they are sound and weather proof. Out of such buildings we can easily make our own stables.

Let me give an instance of a set of stables I devised for a friend. The house was an old farmhouse, and the stables, with the one exception of a small pony box and a stall, were made out of a series of outhouses which had been used for carts, cows, and chickens. What we had to begin with was four walls and a fair slate roof, and floors of bricks or earth of various degrees of foulness and disrepair. Now, the most important, indeed indispensable, matter in a stable is a hard floor and one that is easily kept clean. One difficulty was removed by the fact that there was no inside drain



THE STABLE

This, though somewhat magnificent, shows the head-room partitions and flooring, which are equally possible in our own stables, though in a plainer style.

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of any kind, and it was easy to carry off the water to an open gutter outside, and thence away to the drainage system of the house through an ordinary trap. The greatest of all difficulties and dangers being thus disposed of, all I did was to lay down a concrete flooring to each stable, with a slight slope, so that the water could be carried out of the building by the simple process of sluicing down with a pail and broom. The concrete was ridged to give the horses a foot-hold on it, and when the floors were dry and firm they were ready for use. Then the walls were lime-washed, and a coating of yellow wash gave the stables a clean and cheerful appearance. Whitewash is bad for the horses' eyesight, and in any case the yellow tinge on the walls looks neat and clean. Cheap iron mangers were put in and a ring to hold a bucket, and the inside was complete. There were no hay racks, nor were they wanted.

Now came the question of ventilation. There were no windows, but the half-door, of which the upper half was always open by day and, except in very bad or severe weather, by night, supplied light. Two iron bars were placed across the upper half of the door, for I have known a horse to jump out of such stables. Yet it was necessary, as I have said, sometimes to shut the upper half of the door at night, or when the wind was from the south-west, to which quarter the stables faced, so across the door and under the eaves a row of

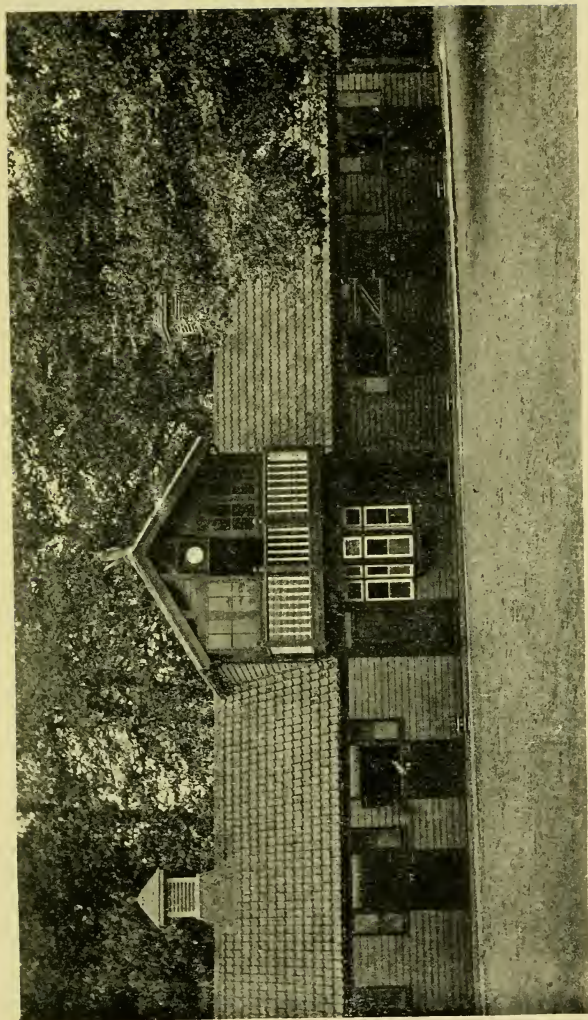
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ventilators were placed, so that there was a current of air overhead, but quite clear of the horse when he was lying down or feeding.

One or two of the boxes were rather smaller than I could have wished, but one has to make the best of what one has, and in practice the horses did very well in these stables. The cost was very small, and I provided accommodation for seven horses and a pony, which proved very satisfactory throughout two hard hunting seasons.

In this case, ornaments and fittings were reduced to a minimum because money was an object; but the air and cleanliness were, in fact, perfect, and the space, if not ample, was sufficient. This is reducing the items of ornament to the lowest, no doubt, but we had everything we wanted, and even a spare stall in which the horses were done up on their return from work, so that each box was clean and fresh when the horse was placed in it for the night.

Supposing, however, I had not found the boxes ready made, but had succeeded to a stable with a row of stalls, what should I have done or advised? If possible, I should have made the stalls into boxes. I think for hard-worked horses a box is practically indispensable. It is, perhaps, a luxury for the rich man's stud; for that of the poor man, a necessity. But it is often possible to turn a row of stalls into boxes by the sacrifice of a single stall and by shifting the partitions so as to give



AN INEXPENSIVE RANGE OF BOXES, RANELAGH CLUB

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additional space to each box. Then doors can be added to the box, or stout wooden poles placed across the opening. This is an inexpensive plan which is adopted in India, and I have employed with advantage in England. Nevertheless, the doors look neater, are more convenient, and are worth the extra expense. The bars I have used in houses rented for the season to make a roomy stall into a useful box. Anything is better than having a horse tied up. He cannot rest and he cannot amuse himself, and many horses fret a good deal when tied up, especially if they have been accustomed to a loose box.

By one means or another I nearly always avoid having my horses tied up, but not quite always, for I recollect one furnished house in a hunting country, rented for the season, where there was only one box among four horses and no possibility of contriving another. The plan adopted was to put the horses into it in turn. The one that had been out hunting had the box on its return and occupied it the next day, or until the next horse came in, and in this way we managed to do fairly well with the moderate accommodation provided. The moral of this story is twofold: if you cannot have what you want, you must do what you can, but do not take a house without seeing it and the stabling.

What I write about boxes applies particularly to hunters, but scarcely less to those horses which

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are used by a professional or business man in the course of his work.

If I were building or remodelling stables on a place of my own, I should certainly have all the accommodation in the form of loose boxes, with perhaps a single stall, which can be squeezed in where a box would not be possible. This is useful to tie up strange horses in, or as a place to clean your own animals when they come in after a hard day. This, I think, is an excellent plan. But as in small stables, for one reason or another, extra space is often wanted, I should then have the doors of one or more of the boxes removable at will, so that bails could be slung between two horses that will now be tied up in the space where one stood before.

As to the dimensions of the boxes they need not all be the same size. If I was building I should like no box to be less than $14 \times 10 \times 14$. But we shall find in practice very few stables are more than 10 feet from the floor to the ceiling. It is from a practical point of view impossible to lay down a rule as to the number of cubic feet of air to be allowed to each horse. But taking 1500 as a fair average allowance we may consider every foot above that as a gain, every one below as a disadvantage. In those stables where the space is deficient the owner must be more than ever vigilant to see that doors and windows are left open freely. I think the sense of temperature



A COMFORTABLE BOX FOR A COIL

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and one's nose are fair tests of the state of the stable. That is, as one comes out of the air the atmosphere of the stable should not strike warm upon one's face, nor should any odour at all, other than that of clean hay and straw assail one's nostrils. I regard, however, 12×9 as the minimum space allowable for a box, nor can a stable be really wholesome with a ceiling less than 10 feet high. In one case where I found a low ceiling there was a loft over the stable. This is always a bad plan, and I secured a fine additional space by removing the flooring of the part of the loft that was over the stalls and loose boxes. This gave plenty of air and made up for the rather too limited area of the boxes below. There is, however, a great disadvantage in a small box, and it is greater in a small establishment than a large one, for a horse takes a certain amount of gentle exercise moving about a roomy box, and though this does not altogether make up for the outdoor work every horse ought to do each day, yet it is better than nothing if, as often happens, there is no one to exercise the horse on any given day. Again, however, we cannot always do what we will and must make the best of things as they are.

To show for how many of the comforts of the stable ample space makes up, I can give an instance. On one occasion I had two horses more than the number provided for. Accordingly I sent for the village carpenter, and with some fear

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and trembling I rigged up two rough boxes in a barn which was nearly as big as a church, and thus, to put it mildly, had a good deal of ventilation. Even the flooring was brick and I had no time to have any change made. Of course I knew that as it was a barn, and had always been used as such, the brick floor at least could not be foul. I picked out the two horses I cared least about and put them in there. Of the whole stud none did better than these. It was the winter of 1901-2, when, as everyone will recollect, we had plenty of frost and snow. The temperature could have been little or no higher than the air outside, and, except that they were sheltered from the rain and wind, the horses might almost as well have been outside. Yet they thrived, and although I gave them each an extra rug I am not sure I should do this now.

Next to plenty of ventilation dryness is a matter of great importance. No horse will flourish in a damp stable. This is one of the advantages of concrete floors, that damp is unlikely to work up. Stables which have the sun morning and evening, or at any rate for part of the day, are the best, because it is easier to dry them, and also because the generally inefficient windows of stables give more light. A stable cannot be too light, though there are very few stables belonging to small houses that are at all sufficiently cheerful and well lighted. How important light and ventilation are



A SIMPLE SADDLE ROOM AND STAND

The Stable

we can gather from the marked improvement in the health of the horses of the great omnibus companies since these matters received a careful and intelligent attention. My readers may take for granted that when their horses do not thrive, in most cases it is the fault of the stables in which they live. After all, in the country, with the help of the local bricklayer and the village carpenter, I have seldom found much difficulty in making stables light and airy. Nothing of course can do away with the unmitigated evil of a drain under the stable, nor would I take any house where such existed, unless I was allowed to do away with it altogether. I have known cases where the cess-pool of the stable drains was actually under the floor of the stable. No horse could be fit to go that lived in such conditions.

Another common and most faulty point in the construction of modern stables is the loft for the storage of forage which is placed directly over the stalls and loose boxes. The one advantage of this arrangement is that it saves labour. But important as this is in a stable conducted on economical lines, I consider the disadvantages to outbalance whatever saving there may be.

And this brings me to a very important matter, the storage of the hay and corn. A man who lives in a county town, or still more in the country, will find it a great economy to buy his forage some time ahead, and to do this he must have somewhere

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to put it. This space is wanting in most stables. Nevertheless, it is well worth the expense of providing the necessary space, not only because you are able to buy in the cheapest instead of the dearest market, but because in the case of hunters you can thus be sure to obtain the old oats which only are of use to condition them for hard work. Nevertheless, you will find that suitable space for the storage of any quantity will often be absent, and you will have to make it for yourself. But these matters will be better discussed in the chapter on forage, and to that I will leave them.

To recapitulate then, the first thing in a stable is to have sound dry flooring without drains so that no liquids shall stand and stagnate. The scent of ammonia is a sure sign that things are not right.

This flooring should be either of concrete or bricks, with a single channel laid in cement, so that nothing can penetrate through the joints. If of concrete the surface must be scored so as to give foothold.

Horses should live as nearly in the open air as possible, but not in a direct draught. Doors and windows should open freely and easily, and there should be ventilating bricks under the eaves to carry off the foul air from the top. In a long building, even when composed of separate boxes, there should be a free course for the air the whole length of the building, which can of course easily



THE BEST SORT OF MANGER

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be managed by placing ventilators at each end of the building and then taking out a brick or making an opening in each partition over the horses' heads.

The interior should be light and cheerful, the walls tinted with yellow wash, and the windows clean and well placed. I like boxes opening into a yard with the half doors described above so that the horse can look out and see what is going on.

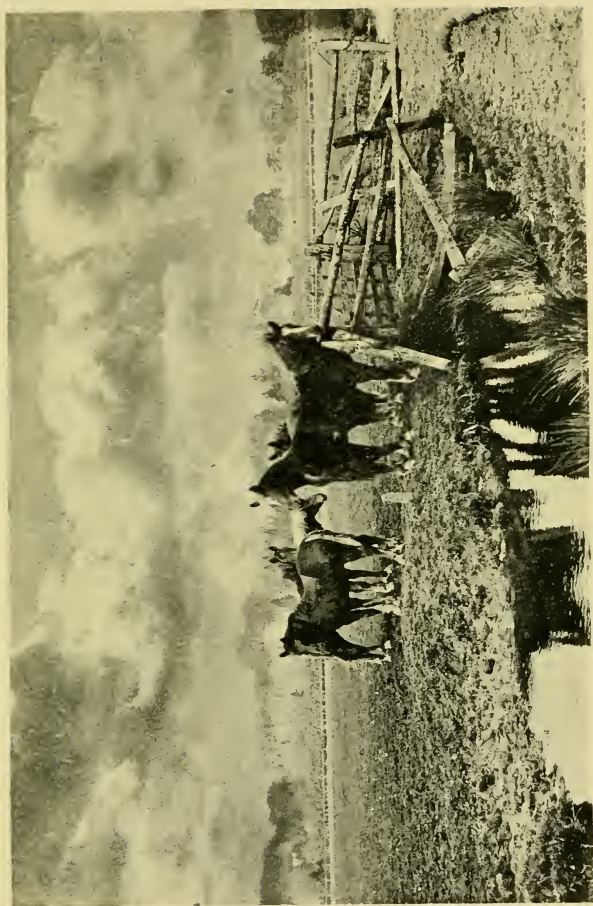
The stupidity, so-called, of the horse, is to some extent the result of the dullness and monotony of his life. Separate boxes with an outlook are better far than solitary confinement in a box entirely shut off, or, I think, than the noise and disturbance of a long row of boxes. The objection to this plan is that the men have to be exposed as they pass from box to box in bad weather, and that the food and bedding are apt to be wetted as the rations are served out. The forage should not be kept in a loft over the stables. If other arrangements can be made, and the floor of the loft is removed, we have gone far towards having a healthy stable. Dryness, however, is of extreme importance. Should reflooring the stables be necessary—and in the case of most stables which we are entering upon for a long tenancy this ought to be done—the opportunity should be taken to raise the floor if possible at least a few inches above the level of the yard outside. There is not much difficulty about this when there

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is sufficient head room to allow it. Country doctors and clergymen, or those who take an old farm-house with the intention of turning it into a hunting-box or inexpensive country cottage, will find their account in having the floors of the stables taken up and dug out to a depth of at least two feet. I venture to say that they will be not seldom astonished and horrified at the foulness of the floor. Ordinary bricks and cobble stones should invariably be dug out and removed; they are quite unsuitable for the man who wishes to keep a healthy stable.

There is no need for ornamentation or paint or polish, but every care should be taken to avoid sharp corners, rough edges, or wood splinters, against which a horse may injure himself.

I should like to add that all doors should be six or seven feet wide, but this is perhaps a counsel of perfection in country stables.



A GROUP OF USEFUL HORSES AT GRASS

There is sufficient feed, yet the horses are not gross, there is a good supply of water—a most important point

CHAPTER II.—*Forage*

THIS is the one chapter in the book in which I shall not be found on the side of apparent economy. Nothing is more extravagant than inferior oats and hay. The reader may be assured that I have made every effort to lessen the cost of my stables. I have never gained the smallest real advantage from foreign oats or hay, nor even from buying inferior samples of English grown stuff. With hunters I have always found the best to be the most satisfactory, and with other hard worked horses I would rather buy better stuff and give less of it. Moreover, in a small stable it is not worth while to have two qualities of food going at the same time. More can be achieved by avoiding waste and extravagance than by saving in the actual cost of the hay and oats.

The reader will note that I put the hay first as being of the greatest importance. Hay is nowadays always expensive to buy, and is more often wasted than anything else in the stable. The quality of the hay he eats is very important to a horse doing fast or hard work. Moreover, I am pleased when having eaten his oats, the horse shows a disposition to clear up all his hay; nor should I grudge him a little over his daily ration. There is one incidental but strong argument for

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the use of peat-moss litter. I have found that there is no waste of hay when I use it, and my hunters have picked up from it every single blade of their allowance. On the other hand, when horses are bedded on straw a great deal of hay is wasted, being trampled down and soiled. But to return: the only saving to be effected is by buying in the cheapest market available, and storing up one's hay and corn. Nothing is more extravagant than living from hand to mouth in the matter of forage. Thus, as already pointed out, it is worth while to construct a granary and a hay store if you have them not on the place. If, however, we go on the principle of making the best of what we have, we shall find that in nine cases out of ten there is a loft over the stable with which we must do the best we can.

First the floor should be examined, so that neither the dust from the forage shall descend on the horses nor the exhalations from the stable poison the hay. Then you may proceed to calculate how much hay you can store there. If you are fortunate in a three or four stall stable you will probably find that the loft over the stable or coach house is calculated to hold about a ton of hay and one of straw. If you fill up the area with hay and use peat-moss instead of straw, almost two tons and a half of hay can be packed there. Hay in trusses occupies less space for an equal weight than straw. This gives you rather more

Forage

than the consumption of one horse for a year, and you must look about to see what other outhouses you have that can be turned into hay stores. I have often found that the coach house can be so used with advantage, and a temporary building erected for the carriage, provided you have only one or at most two. At all events you should try and have a year's supply for every horse in hand, which for four horses would be about ten tons.

This, of course, implies that you have to go into the market, and, buying your stores and hay, cart them and store them at once.

But there are other ways for the man who has a little ready money available. Look round the neighbourhood where you live. You will see the hay fields, note those that grow the best grasses. Then if you see that a field is well saved, with the grasses well in flower, and not seeding when the stack is made, buy from the farmer the whole or a part if you can. It is well to remember that outsides are no use to the man who only keeps horses, but that the farmer can use them profitably. If you buy thus you may safely give it the same year. I think hay well saved is in November more nourishing and wholesome than hay eighteen months old. It is probably a trifle cheaper and it maybe goes a little further.

Again, you may own or rent some land, and make your own hay, and be not a buyer but a seller after you have provided for your own needs.

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To do this successfully requires a little knowledge, and some time expended. Haymaking is proverbially uncertain, and of late years a further difficulty has been added to saving a crop of hay successfully. This is the scarcity of labour in country places. You may have your crops ready for cutting, the weather may be fairly favourable. You may look at your fields and know that every day is so much loss to the quality of the crops. For the man who makes hay for his own use is much more concerned with the quality than the quantity of his crops. Farmers often wait too long to cut in order to obtain more weight, but our horse master will care more for quality. I would cut as early as possible, and even risk possible rain rather than let the bloom go off my crop. Early mowing rather increases our prospect of obtaining labour, as the chances are that we shall be first in the field. Nevertheless, we must be prepared for many disappointments. An ingenious friend of mine who has London friends gives a kind of hay-making party, and enlisting his guests and all the servants, in-door and out-door, succeeds often in saving his crops without much outside labour. All alike work hard until the crop is gathered in. Thus he makes twenty to thirty tons of hay in the year, and finds very little need to buy from farmers or dealers.

But if you have not much land, or none at all, or the grass on what you have is inferior, then

Forage

recourse must be had to purchase. You will then find it well worth while to study the way to judge of the quality of hay. For if you are to obtain the quality you require at about the market price, it is absolutely necessary that you should buy it yourself. No man who wishes to have his horses fit, and to economise, must ever allow a servant to buy anything. Thus the master must be able to judge of the quality of what he buys, and to be able to know for himself what may be the value of stable grumblings. This after all only requires ordinary pains and intelligence. If I am satisfied with what I have bought I pay but little attention to the complaints of the groom. That is, I take no great stock of it in my own mind, but I always pay respectful attention outwardly to complaints, because, first, the man is only doing his duty in reporting anything he thinks is wrong, and secondly, if you ask him for proof, and he is really only discontented because he has not made enough out of the purchase, he is very likely to give himself away.

The following is an instance of this: A certain master bought a considerable quantity of oats from a good sample. They were stored in the granary, and the week's supply served out to the corn bins. "I don't like them last oats, sir, and what's more, the 'orses don't either."

"What's wrong?" enquired the master. Whereupon he was conducted round the stable

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and shown the mangers half full of rejected food. Then he drove off to consult the farmer, a man of known probity, and an excellent sportsman. The farmer thought a moment. "Have you a stable cat, sir?"

"Yes, what has that to do with it?" "You make him give the horses some fresh oats out of the granary. If they don't eat 'em I'll take the lot back." Accordingly the master returned, looked at the mangers, ordered the rejected oats to be taken away, and a fresh supply brought from the granary. These were eagerly devoured. Then the master opened the bin, and put his nose in. "Tell you what, Simmons, it's not the fault of the oats, but the bin is dirty; you've left it open, and cats or mice or something have got in. Don't let it happen again, and mind the horses mustn't refuse their food while you are here," nor did they.

This was an old trick, but like many old tricks, makes its appearance again from time to time. No sensible man objects to tradespeople and dealers feeing his groom if they choose. Even under the strictest rule a groom can help their interests, but such fees must never take the form of a definite commission ("dustoor," as an Anglo-Indian would call it) on any given purchase.

But I have left my readers in ignorance of the way to tell good hay from bad, old hay from new; the former being much the more important of the



SENSIBILITY: THE HEAD OF A THOROUGHBRED (PERSIMMON)

Forage

two. All that is necessary is that the hay, being otherwise of good quality, should have been long enough in the stack for the fermentation to have run its course. A good sample of hay should then be of a brownish green hue, crisp and hard, not flabby to the feel, with the grasses in flower, and not in seed, and it should have a sweet and pleasant perfume and taste. It should not be too sappy, and this is the best way of distinguishing old from new hay. The sap should have had time to dry out of the stems, and remain only in the knots.

The greater part of the nourishment of a horse in hard condition is derived from oats, but a healthy state of the stomach and intestines comes from the consumption of a proper quantity of hay in good condition.

A horse's health depends on the hay he eats, his strength, speed, and endurance on the oats, and therefore we have now to consider the way to buy oats, and the right kind to choose. The nutritive value of oats depends on their weight. A heavy oat makes more flour, and has less husk than a light one. Therefore we should not buy oats unless they range from 38 lbs. to 42 lbs. to the bushel. I would rather pay more for the latter, because they have a feeding value which is greater than the difference in price. But we have to consider not only the weight, but the quality, so to speak, of the individual grains. The following are the points to look for :—

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1. In a sample the grains should be about the same size.

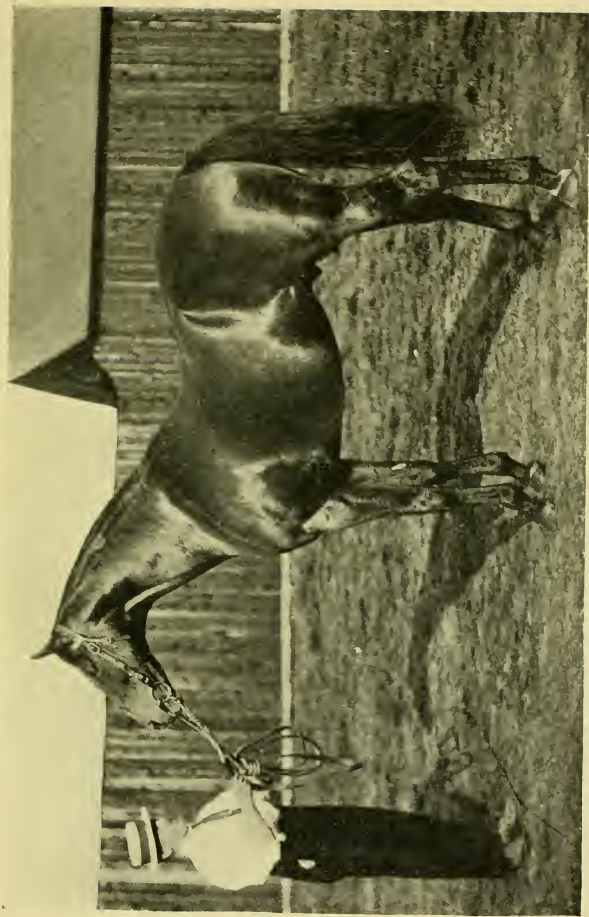
2. They should be hard and dry, and fill out their husk well.

3. The skin should be thin and the kernel hard.

Oats should be almost without odour or taste; if they have an earthy odour they are new, if a slightly bitter taste they are old.

To look at, the oats should be clean, and, if new, should be bright. Take them up in your hand, and pour them out, and they should rattle like hard peas. If you have a granary, and can have the grain kept dry and free from mice, and are careful to turn over new oats every ten days, that will be found a considerable economy. You can then buy oats newly thrashed, white or black does not much matter, though I prefer white. But they must be kept dry, and their chamber, of say $14 \times 14 \times 10$, should not rest on the ground, and should be cemented inside with Roman cement or the mice will certainly get in and your expense and labour be wasted. But whether you buy old oats or new, whether you have a year's supply or only a month or two, it is still necessary to keep them in a clean and mouse-proof store or bin.

Having thus provided for the purchase and storage of oats and hay we have the two necessary requisites for feeding a horse. Everything else in the way of forage is additional, and the use of



THE KING'S STALLION, DIAMOND JUBILEE

This is worth study as an object lesson on the points of a horse. Note the sensible head, the well raised shoulder, the depth of the girth, the strength of the loins, the well defined knees and hocks, the short-cannon bones, and the easy slope of the pasterns.

Forage

peas, beans, linseed, and carrots, depends upon the age, constitution, and health of the horse. The other necessary article for a stable of hard-working horses is bran. I am very fond of bran, both wet in the form of mashes and dry mixed with the food. But it has become less valuable of late, because the nutritive qualities are extracted so thoroughly nowadays, and the price has gone up, so that bran is a serious item in a small stable. Nevertheless, so far as I know, there is no alternative to its use. We must comfort ourselves as best we may with the reflection that bran, given judiciously, saves much physic, and is a preventive of many minor ailments. Nothing else is suitable for the all-important weekly mash. Given dry it prevents the horse from bolting his food and assists the digestion. A horse that has bran mixed with his oats will not pass undigested grains. If, however, the bran bill is too heavy then we must use chop, *i.e.* clover hay passed through a chaff cutter. Carrots in small quantities are always useful, but are not always procurable. I never could succeed in buying many in the Midlands. They are, however, an easy crop to grow, and it is no bad plan to give up a section of the kitchen garden to them.

There are besides these beans, which are used in many stables. Beans are useful but should be used very sparingly. Of year old English beans not more than 2 lbs. a day may be given to old

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horses and to delicate feeders. The danger of having beans in your stable is that grooms are fond of giving them too often and too many at a time. The stimulating effect of the bean being proverbial, they think the more they give the greater results may be looked for. Beans should be split before being used. For young horses I prefer split peas, and I think a small allowance, about 3 lbs. between the four feeds, is useful to young horses in very hard work. The moment that, for any reason, a horse is not working really hard the beans and peas should stop. That is, to a horse doing three days a fortnight in the hunting-field, I would allow 2 lbs. beans if he was over eight years, 3 lbs. peas if he was under that age. In other cases I would give them occasionally, if particularly hard worked, or in very severe weather; but perhaps they are not sufficiently often used to be kept in the bin. Beans if used when they are not required do so very much more harm than they do good if wanted, that I am unwilling to keep them except in a hunting-stable.

Then comes linseed, and about the value of this I have no doubt whatever. I have used it rather freely in my own stables for more than twenty years, and believe that I have found it most beneficial. The one point to be careful about is to obtain the best linseed. It is my custom to boil the grain to a jelly and use it with the bran mashes. The late Captain Hayes had a theory

Forage

that linseed meal was better either than linseed or the oil. I have never tried the meal, and have discarded the use of oil except as a mild purgative, and I am thoroughly satisfied with boiled linseed. It forms once a week, or oftener if required, a part of the regular dietary of my stables. It is my idea that it obviates the necessity for using medicine in many cases in which drugs might be necessary. And for drugs in the stable I have a great distaste.

The conclusion of the whole matter is this. Only the best hay and oats are really worth buying. They repay us in the health and working power of the horse. Economy can only be consulted by buying in the lowest market and storing for future use, and this again is only possible to the man who has his stable expenses in hand, so that he can spend £100 or so in the spring for forage to be consumed the following year. Now not every one can do this, and like other people with moderate incomes, he has to pay a higher price to a corn-dealer and to buy his corn as he wants it. Or again, the horse-owner, for whom I am especially writing, may not and will not have storage for a large quantity of hay and corn.

We now turn to another important topic, that of the bedding for the horses. These are sawdust, sand, peat-moss, and straw. The second I dislike; the first I have never used, though I have seen it in the late Duke of Beaufort's time in the

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Badminton stables. To my mind the choice is confined to the last two. I will set down their advantages and disadvantages as I have found them. Of the economy in the matter of hay, which the use of peat-moss brings with it, I have written, and this to me goes far to decide the question. When I have provided my horses with the best old hay, I like to see them eat it and not trample it under foot. Peat-moss saves labour. It is far less trouble than straw. Where straw is used it is absolutely necessary that every bed should be put outside the stable every morning. This is a great deal of trouble to the grooms and some bother to the master to enforce it. The peat-moss only requires, first, that the litter should be raked to the sides of the box or stall, so that for some hours each day the horse shall stand on the bricks or concrete. With due care, I have found no ill effects to the hoofs of the horses. I am liberal in the way of getting rid of all the soiled portion. I would rather that a groom threw away too much than too little. I like the way peat moss deodorizes a stable. As manure it is, I think, inferior to straw. At least I could obtain 6d. a load less for the contents of my dung-pit when I used peat-moss than when I used straw. As a matter of fact, I do not think one can dogmatise about the value of any manure, so much depends on the soil you want it for. As to cost, I do not think that in small stables there



THE PHEASANT, A WELL-KNOWN PONY OF THE POLO AND RIDING TYPE

This is, for harness and saddle, for ride and drive ponies, the right sort to look for in animals 15 hands and under.

Forage

is much difference between peat-moss and straw. From the place where I am writing this, I should say peat-moss was, owing to the railway charges, the more expensive of the two. Lastly, horses will not eat peat-moss, and I find many horses, especially recently imported Irish horses, are very fond of straw, and prefer it to hay sometimes. This must be qualified by the assertion of some people that horses will eat peat-moss litter, but I have not found mine to do so.

Straw is clean, looks well, and is fairly easy to buy, and I think, perhaps, hunters rest on it better after a hard day, but I am not quite sure of this. If straw is used, I always have two beds, one for night and one for the day, but I found a difficulty in making grooms pick it over carefully enough. As manure, whether for the garden or farm, I greatly prefer it to peat-moss. In any case, I think peat-moss is the best for a small stable. Yet I confess that if money was no object I should prefer to use nothing but straw. The stable unquestionably looks so much better with straw beds and neatly plaited borders.

CHAPTER III.—*The Poor Man's Hunter*

A RICH man can have different horses for special purposes — hunters, hacks, and carriage horses. But the man who only keeps one or two must make his horses serve several purposes, and I have owned animals that were excellent in any position. For example, I bought a mare and she ran in single harness or a pair, as leader or wheeler in a tandem, and she was a delightful hack and a capital hunter. I had her for many years, and her original cost was thirty pounds. She was by a thoroughbred horse out of a half Exmoor mare. She was a well-shaped mare, but she was cheap because she was small, barely 15 hands, and thus not large enough for a big carriage nor for a high-class hunter.

It is the man who looks for economy in stable management who will also wish for horses at a moderate price. To buy a useful horse at a moderate price is not easy, but it is not impossible if you go the right way about it. In the first place one must not go into the markets when there is most demand. We must also bear in mind that if we buy a cheap article it may be useful to us but it may not be saleable. The chances are that if you buy the class of horse I have in my mind, he



AN EXCELLENT TYPE OF AN ALL-ROUND USEFUL HORSE.

Her forehead is excellent. Note the kindly, sensible head and eyes. Being a mare, she looks a little light in the back ribs, but would probably stay well. She has good bone, weight enough for harness work yet carries her saddle in the right place, and would have courage for a hunter, or temper for the road.

The Poor Man's Hunter

will, should you wish to part with him, bring back no more, and most likely less, than you gave for him. Most men are better buyers than they are sellers, and my own experience is, that next to buying a good horse, the most difficult thing in the world is to sell him. The fact is that while there is always a first-rate market for horses of the best kind, whether for saddle or harness work, for the medium animal there is an uncertain demand.

But it is with such horses that we have to be content, and as we are seeking horses for pleasure or business, and not for profit, it is comfortable to remember that, as in the case of the mare noted above, there are many treasures of courage, speed, and endurance hidden among the mass of ordinary working horses.

As I look back I am rather surprised to find how few bad horses I have had, considering that I have only once or twice paid any thing like a high price for them. Only two were wholly bad in the sense of being useless. With most horses one can obtain some pleasure and a good deal of work.

But the natural question is: "How am I to find the animal I want? I am no judge." Now, I would remind the reader here of the old story of the sergeant marching reservists into camp. "Now, men, pull yourselves together; you are not nearly so drunk as you think you are." So I would say

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that people are often not nearly such bad judges of a horse as they think they are. If a man can ride fairly and drive moderately well, he has it in his power to become, with pains and experience, a very fair judge of a horse and quite able to pick one out for himself. The man who can ride and drive has the means of learning two very important points about a horse: first, whether the animal can go; and secondly, whether it is fairly manageable.

The mistakes that would-be purchasers make are two: first, they ask too much advice, when their own common sense would be a far better guide; and in the next place they try to do, or to get a friend to do for them, what can only be done by the veterinary surgeon. For most people a veterinary examination by a reputable and qualified practitioner is desirable. It is not always necessary to refuse a horse that is otherwise suitable because of a technical unsoundness, but the opinion of a veterinary surgeon is valuable.

If a horse carries you well and trots fairly well in harness, and passes the veterinary surgeon, it is more than likely that he will be serviceable enough. Nevertheless, there are a few points that may be noted. First, look at the horse's eye. There is no mistaking the expression of a horse with a kind and sensible look in his eyes. It is not merely a large, full eye we want, for very wild and nervous horses have these, but a certain clear,



A TYPICAL THOROUGHBRED MARE AND FOAL.
Showing quality difficult to define, easy to perceive

The Poor Man's Hunter

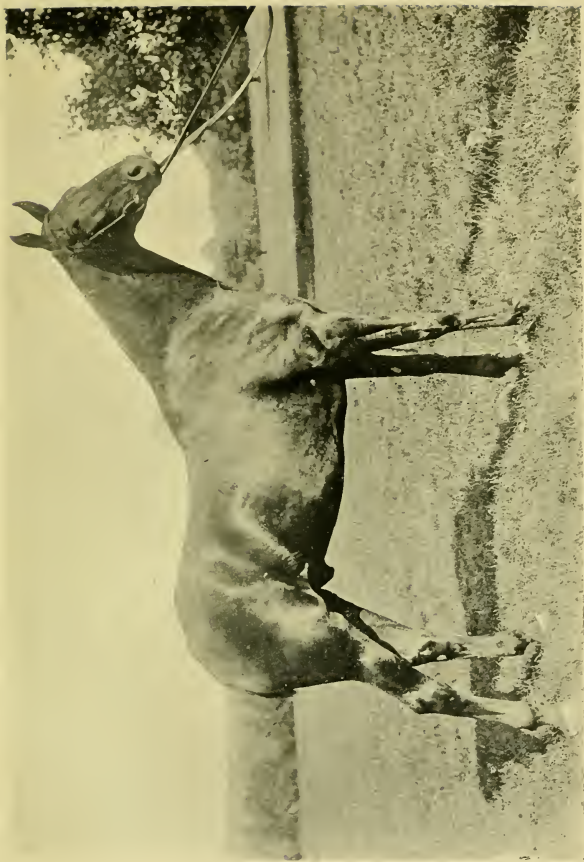
tranquil look different from the startled, shifting glances of the nervous or vicious horses. Nor do I like a small narrow eye, but still I have known such horses to improve on acquaintance. Then I object to a short, thick neck. Even if a horse have a muscular, masculine neck, there is no reason why it should not be placed on his shoulders at the right angle and rising with an elegant curve from the shoulders to the ears. This is not a mere matter of appearance. Horses with necks so put on, carry their heads in the right place. The bit acts easily in their mouths, and they are easier and safer to ride and drive than animals with short, stumpy necks or long and weak ones.

The next point is depth of girth. If you run your eye from the point where the wither joins the back to that behind the elbow the horse should be deep. If the body is light and shallow the horse will appear long in the leg. Thus, if a horse seems to stand high off the ground and to look tall you may suspect a light body, and such a horse is not usually a stayer. A point to be noted is the way the forelegs are put on. If too far back, so that when the horse is standing the legs are much behind the points of the shoulders, I should reject him. Such a horse is more than likely to come down when you ride him. A horse with a shoulder that looks upright may do fairly well, but a horse with a loaded shoulder and his forelegs much under him I would not have. If he has

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straight round legs reject him at once without more ado. If the toes turn in that is a greater disadvantage than turning out. A speedy cut in front is bad and worse still behind. My own idea as to the latter defect is that I should not reject a hunter for it, if I wanted him only for the chase. But I should not take a general utility horse with these defects of action. Many good hunters are bad roadsters. Besides, the man who wants to hunt cheaply must put up with a good deal.

I like a horse for general purposes to have not only what are called good back ribs but rather a round barrel and his hindlegs well placed, and this may be judged by the eye first, but even more by the action. If a horse brings his hindleg well forward in the walk so that the print of the hind shoe is in front of that of the fore then we may be tolerably sure. Nor would I buy a horse that had not good feet. I should prefer a foot approaching what is called a donkey foot to a large weak hoof. But in any case the hoof should be hard, shiny, and smooth ; vertical corrugations make me doubtful. The frog should be clean looking and elastic, and free from smell. Corns are an absolute disqualification for a utility horse, and should be looked for carefully. For a horse that has hard work to do I like a pastern with an easy slope, and would forgive many defects sooner than an upright short pastern. I have never rejected a



GOOD HUNTER OVER ANY COUNTRY

The Poor Man's Hunter

horse because his pasterns were too long, and never had reason to regret not doing so.

But after all, the great matter in a general purpose horse is his action. A horse with smooth easy level action not too high, that puts his feet down well, should not be rejected.

I never have possessed or known a useful horse with hackney blood, and I look out for the signs of this breeding jealously. The coarse head and neck, the foreleg tied in below the knee, the round action, all tell a tale. But this exclusion of the hackney from the utility stable does not include what are called hackney ponies, so called because they are in the Hackney Stud Book. They are only there because it was at one time the only book open to ponies, and have none of the softness of the hackney of the showyard. I am not depreciating the hackney in his or her place. They are delightful horses and they have improved greatly of late years, but that place is not in the general utility stable. They are, as Sir Richard Green Price says, bad to ride.

Bearing these points in mind, and comparing what you have read here with the horses you see on the roads, your eye will soon become trained to note the leading points of a good formation. You will not, of course, expect to find them all combined in any one horse, and you will lay more or less stress on any one of them, according to the principal purpose for which you require the

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horse. Thus if you want a horse to hunt in a deep country, the depth through the heart will enable him to stay through a long hunt; a short-backed horse will go up hills with more ease to himself than a long horse with slack loins. In any case you need good legs and hocks and well-shaped feet; yet all these points must be modified by your experience of the horse in saddle or harness, for the courage, docility, and gameness of a horse go for much, and will often compensate for apparent defects of bodily structure.

If, on the whole, you like a horse, then proceed to ride and drive him. The first thing to do is to put the saddle on, and note where it rests on his back. It is a great point for the saddle to be carried on the right place. Once mounted, start off at a quiet walk, and you will be able to notice how he uses his shoulders. This is a much greater point than any apparent slope as viewed when standing alongside the horse. Nor is it difficult to judge of. If a horse strides away easily and freely, the shoulders are right. Now trot steadily for a mile or so uphill and down, and then turn the horse round, and, easing the rein, let him walk back with his head free. If he does this without tripping or stumbling, and at a fair pace, moving freely and easily, the chances are he is all right. Now take him into a field and gallop him smartly round twice. When he pulls up note how soon and in what way he blows his



UP TO ANY WEIGHT; HARD TO FIND

The Poor Man's Hunter

nose. A horse that does this soon and easily is probably all right in his wind and fairly fit to go.

Now for the harness. Watch him carefully as he is put to ; note if he or she seems nervous and ticklish. A horse that tucks its tail down and winces as the cart is brought on to it, or that lays back its ears, should be regarded with suspicion. Now take the reins, settle yourself quietly in your seat, and speak to the horse. If he walks off easily and steadily that is a point to the good. Watch his ears and his action. If the former move easily and freely, not with a quick, twitching, nervous action, that is another point gained. So, too, the action should be free, level, and easy. If you are not a very good coachman, I would allow some one to drive him whom he knows. Horses, otherwise quiet, are often shy with strangers.

For these reasons you should always speak to a strange horse before riding or driving him. All horses are very much affected by the voice, and I think too by a gentle, firm touch of the hand. The nervousness of a timid man is soon communicated to a horse. A certain quiet firmness is one of the secrets of success in dealing with horses. Women are often able to ride and drive horses that rebel against the rougher handling of a man.

But I must acknowledge that I have gone a little too fast, for I have not said where the required animals, useful and not too expensive, are to be found. In order to be successful, a certain

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amount of time, trouble, and expenditure are necessary. "How do you manage to give three hundred guineas for your hunters?" was a question once asked of an extravagant and impecunious young man. "Oh! it's not the three hundred for the horse that troubles me; it is the three quid of ready to go and see him with," was the reply. But it is the occasional expenditure of the "three quid of ready" that is a considerable factor in the successful purchase of the poor man's horse. Such animals will not come to you; you must go to them. They are to be found, but they must be looked for. I could find, without much difficulty, if money was forthcoming, a hunter or carriage horse or polo pony, but the poor man's horse is not so easy to discover.

The sort of horse we want, strong, active, enduring and docile, must be sought in his native place, where he is bred; useful as he is the price does not admit of his being sent far from home.

The wise man wanting a useful horse will turn his attention to one of those districts where there is the right foundation of moorland pony blood.

I should go to Ireland, to Wales, or to the West of England, confident that I should obtain what I wanted. Then there is the New Forest. A friend of mine there has two cobs about 13.3 that draw a fair sized wagonette from the station to his house. Three miles in twenty minutes is what he expects of them. With these



LIMERICK IRISH HUNTER

An Irish horse with quality. The lie of the shoulder and depth of girth suggest that it would carry a fair weight, say 14 stone, and stay well; is probably a fast horse.

The Poor Man's Hunter

pony-bred cobs and horses the presumption is that they are sound. They have not always perfect manners at first, but with careful riding and driving they improve rapidly. Pony-bred horses are naturally docile. Like ponies themselves they require plenty of regular work to keep them in order. It will be noted that in this chapter I have confined myself to small horses, because for general purposes I consider that such are the best and most useful. A good big horse may be better than a good little one, but he is certainly more rare and much more expensive; and indeed, so far as work is concerned, the small horse will beat the big one. All the cavalry work that has lived in history has, with the exception of a few famous charges, been achieved by men riding small horses.

Just now the fashion runs to big horses, and I confess to a liking for a big horse to ride, but then I have lived a good deal in grass countries. Even there at the prices I pay I have done really better with the small and middle-sized horses. But for ordinary country or town work, for doctors and other professional men, small horses or even ponies are far more useful. We do not make enough use of ponies for hard work in the country. A light four-wheeled dog-cart or a wagonette, with a pair of ponies from 12.2 to 13.2, would do more work and last longer, I believe, than any other conceivable combination of

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horseflesh. Two ponies of that size cost no more than a single horse to buy and if anything less to keep, even allowing for the fact that you have eight feet to shoe instead of four. Horses running in company go further and tire less than in single harness, and why people who have work to do in the country do not make use of our admirable breeds of ponies in pairs or tandems is a puzzle to me. They will do a great deal more work than one horse, and even if (for them) highly fed scarcely cost as much to keep. Moreover, a well-kept, well-mannered, pair of ponies is more saleable than the average useful horse.

The Welsh cob pony or the Dartmoor are suitable for this kind of work. They have rather more substance than the Exmoor or New Forest. But I think one loses very little in hardihood or endurance in the first crosses with the thoroughbred or hackney pony. For harness purposes the latter cross is useful. The hackney pony has very few hackney faults and many of the virtues of his Welsh or Fell ancestry. Indeed, he has very little hackney in him at all. If you want cheap and useful animals to drive there is nothing like a pair of good ponies from 12.2 to 14 hands. If you want a hack to ride and to put in a quiet day now and then with foxhounds or in harness you will find 14 hands a convenient height. This, however, I think, is a useful rule. Always drive animals that are wanted for use in the saddle in a



SUBSTANCE AND QUALITY COMBINED

The Poor Man's Hunter

light four-wheel dog-cart. There is little weight on the back and forelegs, the wheels are close together, and the brake can be easily and effectually used.

If, however, something larger is required I have often found the right horse in hilly countries. A light active cart horse is generally used in these districts by the farmers, and an active mare of this description often throws a quite admirable colt to a well-bred horse. Such a one I know well. He does the whole work of a family living some miles from the station, and takes his turn to do a day's hunting in a hilly country. For staying power he is unequalled, and there are few practicable fences that will stop him. Another by a thoroughbred horse out of a cart mare is a brilliant hunter, and looks like winning a steeplechase. No doubt, however, the soft spot would stop him when it came to galloping four miles over a country at three-quarter speed. But he is a capital horse at the price paid for him, and with the exception of a fiddle-head very good to look at.

Of course there are other ways of buying a useful horse. I have very often picked them up at Tattersalls', bought them at sales of coach horses, of cub hunters, and I once bought a very useful colt at the sale of the effects of a farmer who was, as the auctioneer's bill had it, "declining agriculture." Never buy of a friend or sell a

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horse to one, unless, indeed, you prefer his money to his friendship. To buy at auctions you need to be a fair judge, and also to be able to ride and drive sufficiently well not to want a trial. Speaking in the direct confidence that ought to exist between author and reader, I should say, however, that such people are the exception. But there is no reason why you should not improve, and the more you do the more pleasure will your stable give you. There is, I think, some excellent advice in what I have said, but good precepts are like Opie's paints: they require to be mixed with brains.

So far, I have written about the general purpose horse, but as most people will find that they can or must spare a little more for the stable than they had at first intended, I have always found that I have at least a horse more in my stable than I am supposed to have. Nor does the additional expense amount to much so long as you do not require extra help in the stable. One man can look after two horses and a pony if the master keeps them in work. But it is evident that where there is only one man he cannot afford much time for exercising or going out with the carriage. Still it is wise to keep the wages bill down, for I have noticed that so soon as you add a second man, be it only a helper for the hunting season, the whole scale of your establishment goes up. Why the butcher's and baker's bill should increase



BARONET, THE WELL-KNOWN PRIZE-WINNER BELONGING TO MR. J. H. STOKES

This horse is of hunter type which is the most generally useful of English horses, and greatly sought after by foreign buyers. The position of the man on his back shows the horse's fine riding shape and immense power

The Poor Man's Hunter

because you keep another horse or add a second man to your stable staff is inexplicable, but it does most undoubtedly do so, and all housekeepers where there is a stable will bear me out in this. In the same way when you separate the functions of your horses and keep one as a hunter you have made a step up in the scale of your expenditure. Curiously enough, books on hunting or stable management scarcely ever seem to contemplate one hunter, yet the man with one horse is in reality a familiar figure in most hunts. The stamp of horse needed for a one-horse man in the provinces is, as I have said before, to be found on the borders of Wales, of Exmoor or Dartmoor, in the New Forest, and in Ireland. In fact, wherever farmers use an active, short-legged cart horse, and you know that there is a good thoroughbred in the district. I should try Radnorshire or West Somerset nowadays, and should not expect to fail. The Irish horse is no doubt the best, but to get him at all you want to buy him young, and to ride him very carefully till he is seasoned. The Irish horses I have imported seem never to have had any hard food.

But supposing that you have bought a stout, useful, well-bred horse for a hunter, how much work will he do? Everyone will tell you, three days a fortnight; but many horses can do two a week, though few people will acknowledge to more than the traditional three days a fortnight.

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If they appear out oftener they have just ridden on to the meet to see the hounds. But I believe in reality that no hard and fast rule can be laid down. If a horse is seven years old, is healthy, and has two years' hard food in him, I take him out whenever he is fit and well and hounds are at a convenient distance. My own rule is never to stop at home if I have a horse fit to go. In most years the inevitable frost and snow will keep one in quite long enough. On the other hand, while I never leave a horse fit and well in his stable, I never take one out that is ailing or injured in the smallest degree. There is nothing more fatal than to say, "Oh, it is only a blow," and go out all the same. As long as there is tenderness or heat anywhere there is danger, and the horse should stay at home or be confined to walking exercise. As I believe in hard work for a horse, so I believe in good food and plenty of it. Practically, I would let a horse have as much as he could eat of grain so long as his dung remained healthy, and his mouth pink and clean. Directly a horse is taken off hard work reduce his grain.

But though a horse may be worked hard, and will do with ease more than the conventional amount of work, yet you must take care of him. Do not jump unnecessary fences, neither allow yourself to turn away from one that comes in your line because you consider your horse. If you know he cannot jump it, that is a reason. But we



SILVER CLOUD

A good type of useful hunter make and shape. The horse that can do anything ; safe to ride in a cramped country.

The Poor Man's Hunter

may remember that a hunter's powers in the way of leaping are bounded much more by our fears than by his strength. I am always being astonished at what horses can do, ridden boldly and well. Nevertheless, the old maxim that a fence takes more out of a horse than a gallop over a forty-acre field is worth remembering. But a crowd, pushing and swaying in a gateway, also takes a good deal out of a horse, and it is better to jump the first two or three fences until you have a lead at the gates. As to the best way to cross a country, I have so recently written of that in "Foxhunting in the Shires," that I will not repeat it here. Besides, it would take up too much space.

But there are other ways of saving your horse, especially if you hack on to the meet, and in riding home. For example, I walk up steep and lonely hills, regardless of my boots. This relieves a horse very much. I start early and go on very steadily, and like, if possible, to put the horse into a stable for a short time before the hunt begins. On a hunting morning I feed and water exactly as usual, only being careful that all is finished an hour before I start, however early that may be. After the sport is over, I always give gruel or chilled water and trot steadily home, getting off to ease the horse at steep hills. Before starting for home I shift the saddle an inch or two further forward or backward, as I have a fancy this eases the horse. If the way is long, I get down to walk

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alongside the horse now and again. But if the distance is not more than ten miles, a steady six mile an hour trot, that will take a horse to his own stable door, is perhaps best, with, of course, intervals of walking, which should always include the last mile. The man with one horse should also make short days. He should turn his back on hounds at 3 P.M.

If circumstances take him far from home, so that the horse is late and the hours of absence from the stable are long, it will generally be wise to forego the next hunting day. The man with one horse must recollect that if anything goes wrong he loses his hunting altogether, while his neighbour with a large stable need scarcely lose a day. The former may comfort himself, however, with the thought that one horse, hard worked and well cared for, seldom does go wrong. In a small stable where the horses are wanted to work, two causes of equine ailments are absent—idleness and over-feeding. Plenty of food and plenty of work is the secret of health. Of course I am assuming that the horse is not too young and in hard condition. The poor man's hunter should work nearly all the year round.

I would throw him up at the end of the season for a fortnight or three weeks, and then put him to steady work in saddle or harness. But the pace at which the work is done should be moderate, and the road work not excessive in point of distance or

The Poor Man's Hunter

the weight drawn. The master should have his coming hunting season always before his mind. A horse so treated will condition himself; he should want no physic. All that will be needed will be a few weeks gentle work, which may be taken with the hounds when they go out cub-hunting in the early morning. A horse so treated will, if he is of the right sort, work on for years, improving steadily.

I am bound to say, however, that I think the man with one horse will see more sport in a good provincial county than he would in the shires. I say a good provincial county, because there is one drawback to many counties, which certainly is against the one-horse man, and that is the time it takes to find a fox. When the draws are long, a horse has often done nearly, if not quite, his day's work before the run begins.

Another point to bear in mind is that it is an economy of horseflesh to ride slowly at your fences. A number of flying fences, though in themselves insignificant, take more out of a horse striding over them at a gallop than larger fences taken at a slow pace.

The late Colonel Anstruther Thomson, who was a big man, went slowly at his fences, even when he was Master of the Pytchley, and I could mention many masters of hounds, who are successful in being with their hounds, who do the same. It is obvious that if you drop in for a run of

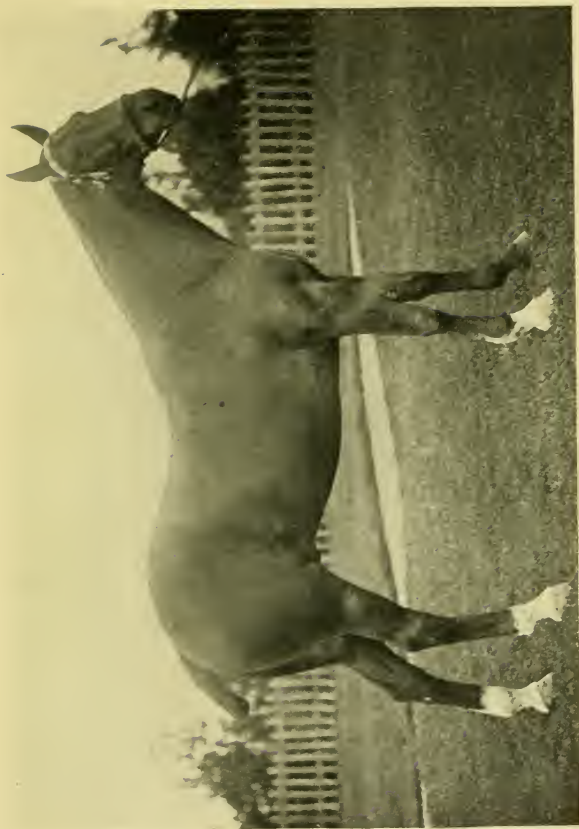
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any note you must at some point in the chase gallop.

To save your horse, then, means to fall back into the ruck out of the place where you can see hounds work, so that the economy must come at the fences.

Necessity may oblige us to keep only one horse. Again we may not be able to spare more than one day in the week for the hunting-field from our other occupations. But if we can manage two horses and a pony we shall, of course, be able to do a great deal more at no very great addition of expense. One man can look after the three, as we have seen, and we ought to have about three days a week on the average. Now, if you really like hunting the more you have the more you want, and there is no time when I feel so keen as when I come back comfortably tired after a good day with hounds. It adds to the enjoyment of the pleasant hour between your return and dinner to reflect that you are going out the next day, and it adds to the pleasure of the visit to the stable to see the horse you are going to ride the next day lick up eagerly his last feed of corn, and to find that the one that has come home is like his master comfortably tired and hungry.

There is one thing I always do that I think is due to one's horse, though it is very old-fashioned. When I come in from hunting I like to see the horse take his gruel, have his bandages put on,



BRAMPTON

The portrait hardly does the horse justice. He was a prize-winner, and carried a heavy weight to hounds in Leicestershire. Yet in the collection of pictures before us no horse combines speed and power better. The picture is worth careful study. The horse has been approved by some of the best judges of the day.

The Poor Man's Hunter

and his head, throat, and ears thoroughly dried before I go in. Sometimes I stay longer, for I have more often than not a groom to train. Two of the best men I ever had knew nothing of hunters when they came to me, and I taught them what to do, how to do it, and, moreover, saw that they did it the right way. For sometimes through excess of zeal a man will spend some time longer than he ought. When a horse comes back from hunting the sooner he is settled down and left to himself the better.

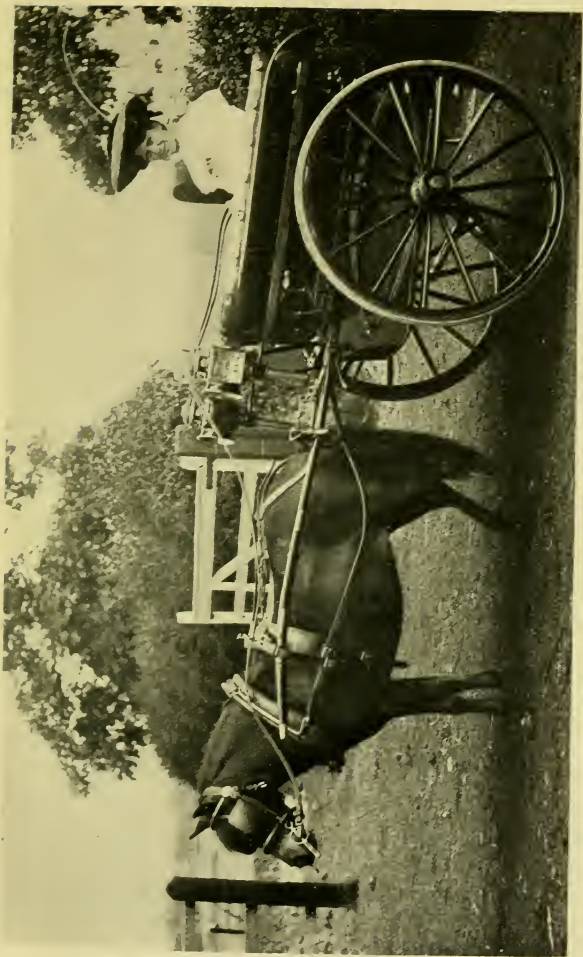
Horses vary a good deal. One mare I had always lay down for twenty-four hours after hunting, getting up only to eat. She came again very quickly, and was as fit as possible the next day but one, and hard to hold the day after. Another very good one never really seemed tired at all, but was exactly the same to all appearances whether she had been out or not. My man and I agreed that we had never seen her tired. This mare had, I know, a dash of Arab blood, and though no enthusiast for the Arab cross, I have noted this rapid recovery from fatigue in other horses which have had Eastern blood in their veins. Of course the type of horse must be adapted in some measure to the country in which we live; but taking it as a general rule it is wise to have as much blood and substance as one can obtain for the money one has to spend. My own experience is that blood is better than substance,

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because the carrying of weight is very much more a matter of make, shape, and courage than of mere substance. I once had two horses, one a big brown horse with plenty of substance, but a little bit long in the back, and with not the best of back ribs, the other a small mare, rather light to look at, but very true shaped. The mare carried my weight (13 stones 7 lbs.) with ease, made just as long days as the horse and was certainly less tired than he. Here quality and balance carried her through.

But the horse is not so much my topic as the way to manage him, and whatever kind of animal you possess, you can add at least a quarter to his working powers by good condition and stable management. This is, however, not to be done without trouble and a considerable knowledge of, and attention to, the details of which much has already been said.

Buy your horse cheap, feed him well, look after him closely, work him hard as long as he is well, rest him completely when anything goes wrong. Never ignore heat, tenderness, or the slightest lameness, however much you wish to go out. Do not buy unsound or ill-tempered horses if you can help it; they are often pressed on poor sportsmen by their richer brothers. "That big horse of mine you can have for"—(say not more than £10 more than he would fetch at auction). Do not buy him even though he may know his business and is offered you at a price that is in itself a temptation.



SUETLAND PONY

A capital type of useful all-round pony for ladies and children. This is quite a typical sort for country work

CHAPTER IV.—*The Harness Horse*

THERE are so many people who have to keep one or more harness horses for their business or profession, that I am always surprised they do not try to derive more pleasure from them than they do. Certain very simple maxims are constantly neglected, such as, that it costs no more to keep a good horse than a bad one, or that two small horses do three times as much work and cost no more to keep than one big one.

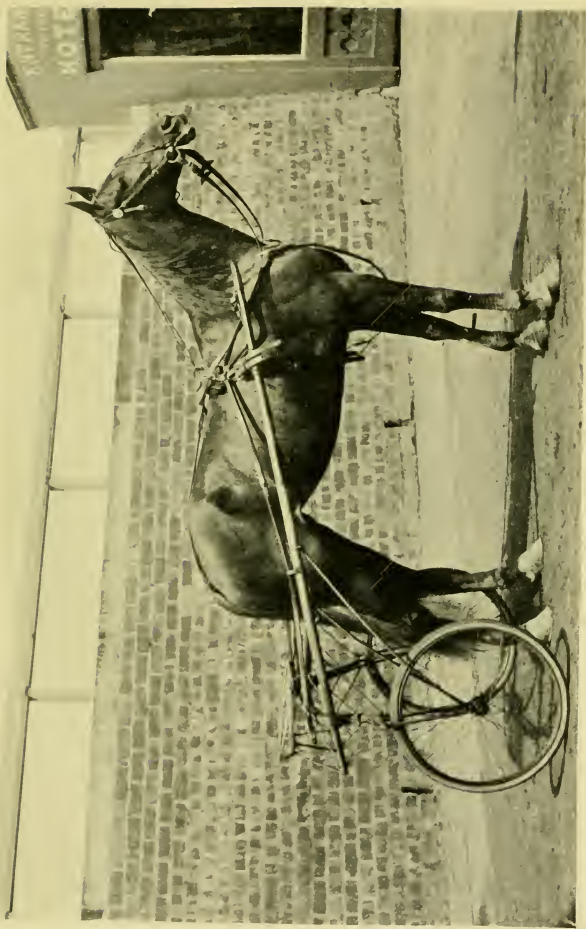
If a man has many miles to drive along the road he may find an immense amount of interest, even perhaps a little profit from his work. There is always a market for good harness horses—ponies particularly—in well matched pairs.

Motor bicycles and cars have indeed occasioned a faint panic among people who drive. The motor, however, is not likely to oust the horse. As a business vehicle to distribute country produce, and for town tradesmen serving a wide district, there is a future before the motor, but as a pleasure vehicle it will have its day. I have no doubt that the use of the motor for trade purposes is retarded, rather than encouraged, by the users of the pleasure car.

But the men who draw pleasure and profit out of horses will not take to motors, and as a matter

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of fact the horse-loving and horse-using class have not adopted them largely. Of course there is no denying the fact that the presence of motors on the roads has rendered these less enjoyable for driving and riding, and so far as I am concerned personally, the existence of the motor has seriously diminished my pleasure in living in the country. The ugliness, the dust, and the smell of the machines, are objectionable. But perhaps the greatest protection against them is the cost of their purchase and their upkeep. It is almost always safe to trust to the idleness of human nature, and since the trouble of cleaning the bicycle and its liability to get out of order when not cleaned, has certainly affected its use, so the motor cars and motor bicycles will be adversely affected by the trouble or expense of keeping them in working order. Machinery deteriorates rapidly, and stoppages and breakdowns will always occur in badly cared for machines, and these will be very numerous, through no fault of the makers, but will none the less be an object lesson to the people who are wavering about their use. A motor car costs in the end more to buy and keep going than a pair of ponies and a smart carriage. I have no doubt that sooner or later some means will be discovered by which motor cars and horses will both use the road. But we shall both have to give up something—the driver of horses some enjoyment and safety, and the motor



AN AMERICAN TROTTER

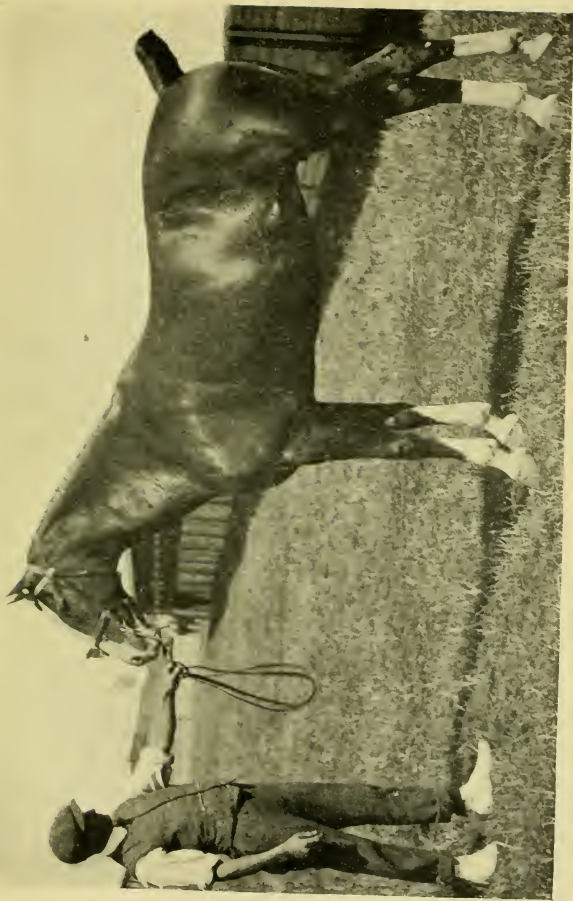
The Harness Horse

driver excessive speed. There is no possibility of escaping the conclusion that high speeds on public roads are, and must be, dangerous, not only because they frighten horses, but because they alarm drivers, and cause them to lose their heads.

But the motor car will not be an entirely useless scourge if it teaches people the necessity of more careful and more skilful driving. Half the accidents arise from want of skill in the driver. Most people who go on to the roads in carriages depend far more on the quietness of the horse than on the skill of the driver. But a horse being an individual, and a bundle of nerves into the bargain, is liable to sudden outbreaks and quite unexpected accesses of fear or temper. To me this is part of his charm, and there is in truth very little danger with a properly trained and skilful driver on the box. Yet it is true that the large number of people who hold the reins have but a very moderate amount of skill to divide between them. The moral of this is, that we ought to learn to drive. I would advocate this, not only on the ground of the safety to ourselves and others, but also on the ground of pleasure. A great many people have to drive, but how many are there who regard it as a sport and a science to be enjoyed and to be learned? I am not particularly nervous with horses, but I profess that it is seldom I am so much frightened as when sitting alongside a man of whose coachmanship I am not sure.

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I am not writing for rich people, but still most of my readers could afford to have lessons, and I think that everyone should learn to drive four horses from one of our best coachmen. It is unlikely that the knowledge will ever be of much practical use, but in handling a team the whole art and science of coachmanship becomes apparent to us, and you will drive the one horse or the pair much better for the knowledge. But if you cannot learn to drive four horses you can find someone to teach you how to drive a pair, and sometimes best of all a tandem. There is nothing to be compared to tandem as an exercise in the higher skill of coachmanship. It has the advantage of being within the reach of anyone. I have heard people say that it is more difficult to drive a tandem than a team of four horses. The truth is that it is not difficult to drive a tandem at all if the horses will go straight forward, and if they will not it is impossible. Of course horses that will go straight for some people will not do so for others. But I contend that any man or woman who can drive at all can drive a tandem if they have the right sort of animals and can use a whip. If they will do this they must incidentally learn a great deal about driving, and gain great skill and nicety of touch. The usefulness of tandem driving lies in the fact that it makes us realise what a delicate instrument a horse's mouth is. Driving a hansom cab would probably have the same effect. I once



HACKNEY MARE ROSADORA

A harness mare, a useful type for brougham or wagonette. This mare would draw a good weight for a long distance. She would not stand much saddle work, as her forelegs show.

The Harness Horse

tried my hand at it, and was surprised to find to how light a touch the horse responded. It required the same kind of gentle firmness that the leader of a tandem does. When the leader turns round and looks you in the face, it is often not so much because of any vice on his part as on account of the weight of the driver's hand. The beauty of a tandem is, that if you have two animals you can drive tandem at almost no additional cost. Leader harness with bars is not very expensive. I say with bars, because that is by far the pleasantest and safest way of attaching the leader, and because with bars you can turn in a much smaller space than is possible with long traces. I think the bars look smarter, and they tell you how much work your leader is doing more accurately than if you use the long traces. But, of course, that is a matter of taste.

The first thing to do in learning to drive is to make yourself acquainted with the harness. Every separate bit of harness should be studied in its relation to every other part. A great number of accidents happen every year because harness either does not fit or is carelessly put on. A driver with any claims to coachmanship should be able not only to harness or unharness a horse, a pair, or a tandem, but to take a set of harness to pieces and put it together again. There are numbers of small things that may happen. The horse's back may be pinched by the saddle or the

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crupper may be too tight. This latter is a common cause of restiveness in horses, and many a jibber has been started on his evil courses by a crupper too tight for him. The bit should be in the right place in his mouth, not too loose so that he can get his tongue over it, nor so tight that it wrinkles the corner of his mouth. The collar must fit accurately; too loose a collar rubs, too tight a collar chokes a horse. A close yet easy fit is what we aim at, just in fact what we desire for ourselves in our boots and breeches. If there is an error it should be on the side of ease. I have not space or time to write a treatise on driving, and indeed the Badminton volume on Driving tells us so much, that a careful study of a book so accessible gives all that can be learned by reading. I am here indicating the things which are too often neglected. I may perhaps claim too a greater practical knowledge of tandem-driving than most men, for I used a tandem in the ordinary course of my work on the Indian frontier, driving considerably over a 1000 miles per annum for three years. What is a pastime to many was for a time work to me, though I am bound to say that duty and inclination went together. On rough and hilly roads and for long distances a tandem is most useful, and distinctly more amusing to drive than one horse or even a pair. But I am considering now not only its pleasantness but its economy. Any two ponies will do provided they will go



A very nice head, the shape of which recalls us to the fact that the hackney, like the thoroughbred, traces his origin back to Eastern sources. It is well worth study, since the head is no unimportant matter when we are buying a horse. Note the position of the eyes high up in the face, the slight concavity in the outline of the profile, and the boldly designed clean cut nostril and lips.



TYPICAL HACKNEYS

A beautiful head of a pony full of character. This was taken from a hackney pony, a breed which has much Welsh blood in it.

The Harness Horse

straight forward. It is quite unnecessary to have a particularly high cart, in fact the only thing that matters, and even that is not indispensable, is a sufficient breadth between the axle boxes. A cart sufficiently broad runs more smoothly, and even if in itself a little heavier is easier for the horses. I have said that it is not necessary to sit particularly high, indeed the seat should be easy and firm, and there should be sufficient bend in one's knees to give the extra pull which is occasionally required. A tandem indeed requires very little strength, and even if you are run away with, which has twice happened to me, you are more likely to come out safely by playing one horse off against the other than by setting to work to pull them up. The danger of a runaway tandem comes when the two horses become mixed up. The great thing to do is to keep the leader clear of the wheeler and prevent him from pulling the wheeler over. You have with the length and leverage of the leader reins a great chance of steadying the leader when the wheeler will probably steady too. Once you have got them in hand drive very steadily. Horses that have once bolted are very apt to start off again on very slight provocation, and the second bolt is generally worse than the first.

But I have gone a little fast, carried away by the subject. There is one thing everyone who drives tandem must learn to do, and that is to use

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the whip. Most tandem whips as sold have three faults, they are too long in the crop, too long in the lash, and too expensive. Five feet is quite long enough for the stick, and the thong and lash should not be more than another six feet. This is a very manageable whip, and we should proceed to practise with it until we have a mastery over it and can use it in a moment directly it is required. Our control of the leader only lasts so long as he is going fairly straight, and the whip is sometimes necessary to supplement the reins. The tandem whip is primarily an instrument for the guidance of the horse, not for his punishment. A horse or pony that requires a great deal of the latter is out of his place in a tandem. We do not want him to be afraid of the whip, but to regard it as a signal. For example, the leader in a tandem should only just carry his bar, doing little or no work on the flat and none at all down the easiest slope. Nothing looks worse or is more dangerous than for a leader to be doing all the work on the level; directly we come to a hill or a bit of deep ground the whip gives the signal to the leader, makes that easy which would have been but labour and sorrow without him. I claim that you can go further, more pleasantly, and with less fatigue to your horses in this way than in any other. There is a great deal in practice, and though at first you want easy horses, yet after a time, when you thoroughly



A FINE TYPE OF PONY (WELSH), GOOD TO RIDE OR DRIVE, THE MOST GENERALLY USEFUL ANIMAL IN A SMALL STABLE

The Harness Horse

understand the ins and outs of tandem-driving, you can make any free horse into a leader. When I have been short of horses on a journey I have more than once bought ponies out of a Cabuli drove, put them in harness, lunged them till they ceased to kick at the traces, put them into the lead and driven them a stage the same afternoon. A willing horse, a light hand, and a ready whip will take you anywhere with a tandem that wheels can go. Thus tandem is a capital way of training a young horse, and as it causes very little strain, and can be made as easy as you like, you can use a three-year-old colt and impress on his mind early lessons of docility and handiness.

Next to driving tandem a pair is the pleasantest, and when well driven and newly put together there is something most fascinating in the rhythm of the eight hoofs. In a light four-wheel dog-cart a pair of young ponies can be put together, used for one's business or pleasure, and sold, and the process begun over again. The fascination of the pursuit lying in the making of the pairs, without looking primarily to profit, yet I have found in practice that in this way one adds greatly to the interests of one's drives and diminishes the cost. But in making young harness horses into pairs it is desirable to have a trustworthy equine tutor with which one can harness the youngsters at first, and from whom they can learn manners and the way to work. But, of course, in making

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pairs such as these you must always pay attention to what you are doing. The ponies ought not to slouch, should always be driven up to their bits. It seems to me that in making and matching ponies there is a fund of interest and amusement. We must remember that the pony has enormously improved of late years and is improving still; you can in fact buy ponies now of any type you like, from the miniature hunter to the little harness horse, that steps well and trots fast. I foresee a great increase in the use of ponies, for, except to ride as hunters, for all ordinary work the pony from 12.2 to 14.2 is much better and cheaper than any horse.

But it may be said that I have written of all the kinds of driving and harness horses except the most useful of all, the single horse. Well, we will come to him. If you wish to have a horse for general harness work in the country he should not be too big, 15.2 is quite large enough, for bigger horses knock themselves to pieces on the roads. I like a horse with some weight and substance, especially in a hilly county. He should have good but not high action, and be able to trot ten miles an hour comfortably; not, of course, that a horse should always be driven at that pace, but one ought to have something to spare. A horse goes more safely and pleasantly, and lasts longer, if he is not pushed to the top of his pace. A horse of this kind will draw a wagonette, a light



A VERY USEFUL HARDY SORT FOR HARNESS IN A HILLY COUNTRY. PLAIN BUT GOOD

The Harness Horse

brougham, or a dog-cart, and, if well managed, will last for years. All I have said about forage applies in this case also, except, of course, that a horse of this class would not be fed so highly as the hunter. Peas, beans, and, to a great extent, bran, except when the horse is out of sorts, may be dispensed with. But the same care should be taken with his hay and oats. It is not always necessary to buy the hay and oats of the best, as I have already pointed out; but in spite of the need for economy it is well to remember that the best food is really the cheapest. The feeding value is so much greater and the horse is likely to thrive better and last longer. There is no sort of horse or pony which does not pay for care in feeding. If an animal is to look well, go fairly fast, and do a reasonable amount of work, it must be fed accordingly. Thus, for a family harness horse in full work, the following ration—8 to 10 lbs. oats, 2 lbs. bran, and 14 to 16 lbs. hay, according to the size of the animal, would be sufficient, with a bran mash on Saturday night.

One such there was in my family that came from Wales and worked for twenty-three years, never being sick or sorry during the whole time. I suspect that most of such horses are by well-bred horses from active cart mares, the latter going back on the dam's side to mountain pony blood. It is a favourite idea of mine that horses are bred because the inhabitants of a district want that class

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of horse, and not because anyone deliberately sets before himself the idea that he will breed a particular class. Of course I refer to working horses, the race horse being a different matter altogether.

THE HARNESS-ROOM AND FITTINGS

This must needs be a dull portion. Its necessity must be its excuse. The harness-room in most places is far too small and the fittings are bad. It seems perhaps absurd, but is not, to say that I think the small, stuffy, draughty, smelly rooms are not only bad for the harness and saddles, but are demoralising to the man. Yet it is difficult to see how a groom can take a pride in turning out his harness and saddles properly if he has no space and conveniences. It is wonderful what a good man will do with insufficient accommodation; but a moderate man will fail, and a careless one find excuse for his carelessness, in bad or insufficient surroundings, and our saddles and harness will depreciate very rapidly. There is no reason why we should be otherwise than smartly turned out, even if our annual expenditure is limited by hundreds instead of thousands. Indeed, the reasons for this are increased, for nothing tends to the preservation of leather work like regular care and cleaning. Therefore we should, if possible, give our groom space and proper fittings to hang up his harness.



BELCHTON ROYAL

Here we have an almost perfect type of harness horse well worth studying by those who wish for work and style.
A hardy, bold horse, with weight and courage.

The Harness Horse

We will, however, consider, what is the necessary outfit for a small stable, beginning with SADDLES.

Cheap saddles are to be avoided. I once bought one and was quite glad to give it away. Everyone has their own favourite maker, and it is not for me here to mention names. But at all events let the maker be a good one, and the saddle well cut and well made. It is really of considerable importance, both to the horse and the rider, that the saddle should fit the former and suit the latter. Nor would I ever buy a saddle that did not suit me, however good it might be in other respects. A saddle should be roomy. Weight is of small importance in a saddle compared to sufficient length and space. It should be so cut and stuffed that it will not press on the horse anywhere. It should sit right off the withers. Cut-back saddles I do not care for, but some people like them. The flaps should not be stuffed but sit close to the horse. I prefer plain flaps, but that is, of course, purely a matter of taste. They certainly look smarter. When you have a new pair of stirrup leathers, hack about in them until they have become easy and flexible. It is a great mistake to hunt in new leathers, they are very apt to lead to strain of the rider's muscle. For girths, the Fitzwilliam are the best for general use, but if they rub the horse then leather girths will be in some cases found to be better. I have

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tried all sorts of girths, but come back always to the Fitzwilliam. Some people provide a cheap saddle for exercising in. I prefer that a horse should always go out in the saddle he is accustomed to and that has been stuffed to fit him.

Then we come to BITS and BRIDLES. These come together naturally, since the bits should always be sewn on to the bridles. There are two forms of the bit and bridle which the ingenuity of inventors have varied into many shapes—the snaffle and the bit and bridoon or double bridle. There are many variations, but I have come to the conclusion that if I cannot ride a horse either in a snaffle or a double bridle, with a longer or shorter cheek according to the horse's make and temperament, I cannot ride him at all, and I think that most of my readers will come to agree with me as a general rule. There are two exceptions to this rule. For some horses a gag is useful, and for others a bridle, recommended to me for a rash horse, that is just too much for one to hold comfortably. It was, I believe, invented by Mr Stokes, of Market Harborough, and the one I have was made for me by Mr Jeffreys Clark of the same place. I have found this answer very well, but both the gag and the bridle to which I refer require light hands. I always try to ride my horses in as light a double bridle as possible, and generally find that after a time most of them go comfortably in it. Another plan that I have often



AN AMERICAN

A hardy, ugly, useful, and as a rule capable of a great deal of work. They are less pleasant horses than English, but often cheap and useful.

The Harness Horse

adopted with success is to pass the curb reins through the rings of a running martingale. This, as has been pointed out, has the advantage that directly a horse ceases to fight against the hand you can ease the pressure. I have seldom found it fail to restrain a too eager horse. But I frankly confess I dislike a horse I cannot hold fairly easily, and never ride one if I can help it. The poor man, however, must not reject a horse because he pulls more than he likes. Many horses do this simply because they have been badly ridden, or when they are fresh or because they want to be in front. A certain keenness is desirable. Several hard-pulling horses have passed through my hands. Of these one succumbed to the judicious use of a gag in about three weeks. He had been trained for steeplechasing, but turned out quite a pleasant hunter in an ordinary short cheeked double bridle. A mare that came to me with the character of being a hard puller never went happily till she had the same light bridle on. The third required a lot of work, and generally ran away if he had not been out hunting twice in the week. It took me a little time to find this out. But there was no difficulty afterwards. I was quite willing to have an extra day. It was clear that if I could not hold him the horse was no use, so that the risk of breaking him down did not come into the calculation.

In whatever bit a horse is ridden, in that he

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should be exercised, and in all cases I send horses out with a light double bridle. If a groom has heavy hands he will do less mischief in deadening a horse's mouth with a curb than a snaffle. I may say that when a horse pulls I always have a leather guard to the curb, as one's object is not to hurt but to restrain him by means of pressure. There are horses, of course, that will never go so well as in a snaffle, and some people like a Pelham and perhaps some horses do, but I have never found a horse that would not go as well in a light double bridle as in a Pelham. But the longer one lives and has to do with horses and riding, the more one feels that one does not know all that is to be known.

In choosing a bridle there are two points which, if we bear in mind, we cannot go far wrong. The first is that we must be able to control the horse, and the second is that the bit must not be so severe that the horse is afraid to go up to its bridle. In either case there can be no pleasure or safety for the rider. So much is said, so many things have been written about not over-biting horses, and about what can be done with light handling, that people often put far too light a bit on. It must be remembered that, like the American mule-driver's flow of language in exhorting the impenitent mule, hands are a gift of nature. That we have not any particular gift is always probable, and experience ought to make

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us quite certain on this point. Then we must recollect that even if we ourselves have the gift yet that others have it not. In any case it is the greatest possible mistake to go into a crowd on a strange horse that is under-bitted. If he gets the better of you he will never be safe to use again. You ought not to feel that the horse could spring into his bridle and gallop off at any moment.

The Eastern plan of beginning the horse's training with a severe bit is, with certain modifications, a wise one. In training a young horse or trying a new one, it is a wise precaution to bit him in such a way that we can be master of him. The old cabriolet horse of our immediate forefathers was frequently driven with a safety rein. The horse was driven habitually on the cheek, but there was a second rein buckled to the lowest bar which could be used in case of need. In driving young and powerful horses, or trying animals of which we are uncertain, it is not at all a bad plan to have this second safety rein. The reins may be held as we would the reins of a team or tandem. We can thus drive a horse with a light hand with the certainty that we can at a pinch gain complete control by the use of the rein buckled on to the lower bar.

CHAPTER V. — *The Treatment of Horses at Grass. Some Simple Remedies. Recapitulation*

THAT horses which are wanted for fast and severe work like hunting are better for being summered either in a loose box, or kept in light but steady work, is a truth of which I am as convinced as was Nimrod. Thin-skinned, well-bred horses are terribly worried by the flies, and very often come up from grass looking very much worse than when they went out. But for a stud where it is desired to economise labour and food a grass field is a great saving. Nor does a certain amount of time at grass do a horse used for ordinary hacking and carriage work any harm, while it will materially lessen the oat and hay bills at the close of the year. I know a very well-bred horse that does all the carriage work of a household upon grass. The county town and railway station is some distance off—seven miles certainly. He has a little hay in addition, and an occasional feed of corn. He draws a heavy family wagonette with great ease to himself at a fair pace, and when not wanted for the carriage he takes a turn at the lighter work of the home farm. No horse could look better. He is, however, in the hot weather never turned out by day; he remains in his loose box, and only



PEANUT

Smart active pony of the Polo and riding type. A very useful sort for saddle or harness.

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goes out at night. And this is the secret of turning out horses without doing them harm. They should from June to September come up in the day time and go out at night. It is the horse's nature to feed during the early hours of the night. Thus the horse is not worried by flies, and so he lies down part of the time; he does not make himself so gross as if he has the longer time to feed in. A horse that is only wanted to travel at a moderate pace and over comparatively short distances of ground thrives with very little corn. Most horses are over-fed in proportion to the work they do. If you have occasion to work a horse hard you cannot feed too well, as the great omnibus companies and cab proprietors have discovered. A hunter may have as much as he can eat while he is doing full work, but his rations should be docked as soon as ever he ceases to work. But to return to the horse at grass. There is one thing most important, and that is that there should be a continual supply of water in the field where he is. Horses suffer a great deal from want of water, and in no case should a horse be left for twenty-four hours in a field where water is not accessible. The horse that spends his day in the loose box can have a pail of water always by him, and will not want to drink at night. On the other hand, if there is water in a pond or stream in the field they will in hot weather stand in it. I had only this last summer

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two horses come up from grass with something very like mud fever and a most decided thrush, the latter a complaint which ought to be almost unknown in a well-regulated stable.

They had been summered in some meadows where there was a stream. Their legs and feet required considerable care to bring them round, and the experience only confirmed my distaste to turning horses out. At the same time, while I dislike turning out horses for a whole summer, I see no disadvantage and a considerable economy when we have the use of a grass field in turning out a working horse from time to time when he is not wanted. In the case of small horses, cobs, and ponies, it is, in the part of the country where I live, quite the custom to do this. Horses which are corn fed, turned out occasionally, should always be taken up by day in hot weather, by night in cold, kept in in wet weather altogether, and should have one feed of corn at least, even on the days when they do no work at all.

I am not prepared to say that a run out at grass for a few hours once or twice a week may not do a horse good. There are, however, many people who turn horses out altogether when not in use, and this is done in the case of both hunters and carriage horses. It is cheaper and less trouble than any other mode of keeping them, and thus some people of experience now think horses are benefited by the rest and change. Whatever good



BROOD MARES

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may come is, however, more than balanced in the case of hunters by the loss of condition. But let us suppose that by choice or necessity we have summered our horses out of doors. They have had some corn and plenty of water. But they will come up very fat and gross, and have to be got into condition again. I knew a cob that came up so fat that she could not get between the shafts of the cart, and she had to be run almost for a week before she was sufficiently reduced. The custom is to give a dose of physic when the horse is taken up from grass. But I dislike drugs for horses, and in twenty-five years I have only given one dose of aloes, and that was to a racing pony. In the first place, when the horse is brought up the stable should be kept as cool as possible. They should not be rugged as long as the nights are mild. Corn should not be given at first in any quantity. My own plan is, feed on bran and linseed, the latter boiled to a jelly, for a week. About half through the week I mix corn with the mash, and twice a day I give a simple alterative powder in the food. The mash is gradually discontinued and corn substituted; from the first I give plenty of long hay. The work is accommodated to the food, slow at first. I do not take them out of a walk for the first week, and then no pace faster than a steady hound trot is desirable for another fortnight. The exercise and food should be gradually increased until the horses are

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doing about eighteen or twenty miles a day at a slow pace. If it can be managed the horses should do their exercise twice a day, trotting and walking from eight to ten miles each time they go out. Hunters should trot up hill ; it puts muscle on the back and loins and improves the wind. This should be continued for six weeks or two months before the horse goes into hard work.

When a horse is taken into work after coming up from grass it is particularly likely to rub or gall, so the stuffing of the saddle should be carefully looked to, and any necessary alterations made as required from time to time. It is clear that the saddle or harness which fitted a horse easily when in hard condition may not do so when he is fat and gross after six or eight weeks at grass. All these minor details need careful watching, and it is on close attention to these that success in the stable depends. We all know people who are often in trouble with their horses, and others whose stables are free from ailments. In the latter case it is looking after these smaller matters which is the secret of success.

Generally speaking, when anything happens in a stable, if we have in the neighbourhood an intelligent veterinary surgeon it is well to let him attend to the animals. But there are some minor ailments and accidents which can be treated quite as well by ourselves. In any case there are emergencies where simple remedies, promptly

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applied, may save serious injury. My principle is to use few drugs and to apply the simplest remedies. It is also well to remember that prevention is better than cure. In the case of cuts and wounds which are not serious, as, for example, jagged cuts on the legs such as horses are liable to in stony countries: to wash the wound clean with cold water and keep the dirt and air out is all that is needed. It is undesirable to heal a wound too quickly, it should heal from below. Grooms are very fond of healing a place superficially. But if we keep the place thoroughly cleansed, and put round it a bandage over a little cotton-wool with a little iodoform ointment, we may leave the rest to nature. In very many cases it is desirable to give a complete rest until the place heals up. In this case the diet must be reduced and the horse fed on bran, linseed and hay, with but a very small allowance of oats. The food should be plentiful, nourishing, but not heating. Where most people fail is in want of patience; the horse is taken out too soon, the place reopens, and we have much of our trouble over again.

In fact in all injuries which have to do with the legs—cuts, wounds, bruises, blows or strains—rest is a great factor in permanent recovery. In most cases where firing or blistering are resorted to, the principal benefit derived is from the enforced rest. Rest and cold or hot water is the best cure, I had almost written the only one. With regard

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to the use of embrocations they have their place in stable economy, but they should never be used while there is the slightest inflammation or heat in the leg. When we find one leg is hot to the touch, and somewhat tender, the best plan is to heat some water, and, getting two sets of flannel bandages, to place one of them in the water as hot as the hand can bear it. The bandage should be wrung out as dry as possible. Over the wet hot bandage a dry one should be placed. Then the horse should be left for about two hours, when the bandages are removed. The upper bandage will be quite wet, and the leg will be found quite dry and cool. At all events the inflammation will be much reduced. The bandages may be put on the next day, or simply in bad cases renewed, until the inflammation or heat has gone. Now we may put on our favourite embrocation. I have never quite made up my mind whether it is the rubbing or the embrocation that does the good, but still there is no doubt that benefit does arise, and it is probable that when the inflammation is reduced the restorative activity of the parts involved is stimulated by the application. I have for many years used hot water bandages for hunters or harness horses after a very hard day's work, and we adopted the same plan with benefit for the racing ponies in India after their morning gallops, when the ground was hard. Simple cuts, wounds and bruises, include all the ailments that can be



WELSH PONY STALLION, THE PROPERTY OF MR. JOHN JONES, DINARTH HALL

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treated safely by the amateur. In the same way an alterative powder, a simple embrocation, and care and judgment in diet, are far better than many drugs or patent foods.

One exception to the latter I make, and that is in favour of the preparation called "Grula." I never go out hunting without a packet in my pocket. I have had so much trouble at wayside inns to get gruel that I find this preparation, which simply requires to be mixed with a pail of chilled water, very useful. I also give it to the hunters when they come back from hunting, and I think that they have done better and come round more quickly after a hard day. Since I first used it I have hunted for part of the year in a rough country, where the distances are great, and we make long days, and the advantage of having a pick-me-up, which is easily made for the horse before a long journey home, is very great.

There are one or two common ailments which ought not to occur at all, but which nevertheless do so occasionally. These ailments are the result of carelessness in the stables, and a groom is almost always in fault. I say "a" groom, because while I should look very sharply after a man to whom these things happened, it is always possible that they may come through causes over which the man has no control, and may be the result of other people's carelessness. Such ailments are thrush, cracked heels, or mud fever. All are common

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and are serious, and they belong to the order of complaints of which it is emphatically true that prevention is better than cure. Of all these it may be said that once started they are apt to break out again on the slightest recurrence of the original causes. These are dirt and moisture. The prevention and the cure are both assisted by avoiding the causes. I never allow a horse's legs or feet to be washed. The greatest care should be exercised in picking out a horse's feet, and on the smallest symptoms of thrush, which can be easily detected by the smell, the feet should be stopped with Stockholm tar. In bad cases of thrush the foul matter should be carefully removed—bearing in mind that a horse's foot is a very delicate organism—and the cavity filled up with tow and powdered alum. But in most cases Stockholm tar is sufficient. Even in these days grooms are very fond of stopping a horse's foot with cow dung. This is quite useless, and probably harmful. At all events it should never be permitted in a well-managed stable. If the stable is apparently clean and well kept, and the thrush persists, then it may be well to examine the floor of the stable. This will often in old stables be discovered to be very foul, and this is quite sufficient to account for the trouble. The floor should be picked up to a depth of two feet, and the foul earth and stones taken away. The space should be filled up with rubble, which makes a good foundation, and



BERKELEY FLASH
Pony sense and character

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channelled bricks laid down in a bedding of cement six inches deep. Another trouble in many stables is cracked heels, which arises in the first instance from moisture lodging in the heels not being carefully dried out. If a horse shows signs of having hard, cracked heels—the scars and thickening of the skin are very perceptible—it is a good plan to put a little glycerine into the heels before he goes to work. This is a simple and effective preventive. Again, when a horse comes in with its legs wet and muddy after a long journey, they should neither be washed nor dried by hand. Clean flannel bandages may be neatly put on and left on for two or three hours. When removed the legs will be found dry and warm, and the dirt can be easily brushed out. Another complaint is mud fever, and this is seldom or never seen in horses whose legs are dry. In the many years I have kept horses I have only had one case. In the above cases the horses food should be looked to, the corn reduced, and bran and linseed mashes given. There is nearly always a little fever in all these cases, and the horse should therefore be cooled down.

If after a hard day's work we find the horse's legs are hot, and especially if one leg is more hot and puffy than the others, we may suspect injury. Possibly a strain of a ligament or joint. At all events it is a warning to us to be careful. The first precaution is to rest the horse entirely, to cut

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off his corn, to give bran mashes and linseed. Then the hot bandages may be applied and the inflammation reduced. After this cold water may be applied by means of a hose, or by the simple method of standing the horse near the tap and letting a stream of water run over the affected part. A horse should not be worked as long as there is heat or swelling, however slight, for these are signs of mischief still remaining. Even after the leg is perfectly cool and firm to the touch, and all, even the least sign of lameness, has departed, the horse should be brought into work very slowly. It is obviously most unwise to take a horse that has been suffering from even a slight sprain out for a day's hunting. The best plan is to put him gently into work, increasing his food gradually, and keeping him in steady work for a week or ten days, when if the legs remain cool and hard we may assume that the danger has passed. Many serious cases of lameness have had neglected symptoms for some time before. I once had a very excellent Irish mare, she hit herself in jumping a fence, and there was a good deal of swelling and lameness. She was getting on well when I took her out hunting, and paid the penalty of impatience by not being able to ride her again that season. Brilliant willing horses are particularly liable to these troubles, because they do not show us that they are tired until long after their more sluggish stable companions would have cried

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“enough.” It is to tired horses that accidents generally happen. When a good horseman knows that he has asked a great deal of his horse he rides with more care, holds the horse together, and saves him in every possible way. On the other hand, the inferior horseman, being tired himself, rolls about in the saddle, and lets his horse’s head go. It is perhaps for this reason that light weights break down more horses than heavy weights. One is careful because he knows that he is in danger of accidents; the other careless, forgetting that when a horse is tired a light man rolling about is worse than a heavy man sitting still.

To recapitulate the main principles of horse-keeping.

First, the purchase of the horse.

- (a) Consider what you want him for, and keep that before your mind.
- (b) Never buy a horse you do not like.
- (c) Never be persuaded to take a horse that does not suit you.
- (d) Other things being equal, a small horse is more useful than a big one: a cob than a horse, and a pony than a cob.
- (e) A large horse eats more than a small one.
- (f) He takes a longer time coming round after a hard day.
- (g) He is generally less sound, and nearly always less hardy.
- (h) Two horses are more economical than one

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if you want them for work as well as pleasure, as you are not so likely to overwork the one, and the cost of two horses is about one-third more than that of one.

THE STABLES.—Air, dryness, and cleanliness are best attained by open windows, outside drains, and removal of litter.

FORAGE.—The best is the cheapest, but if we cannot afford the best then we must buy the best we can. It is better to give less of the best forage than a greater quantity of inferior stuff. Water should be always in the stall. Exercise should be regular, and should be from ten to fifteen miles a day as a minimum.

Hard-worked horses, *regularly* fed and well groomed, thrive best.

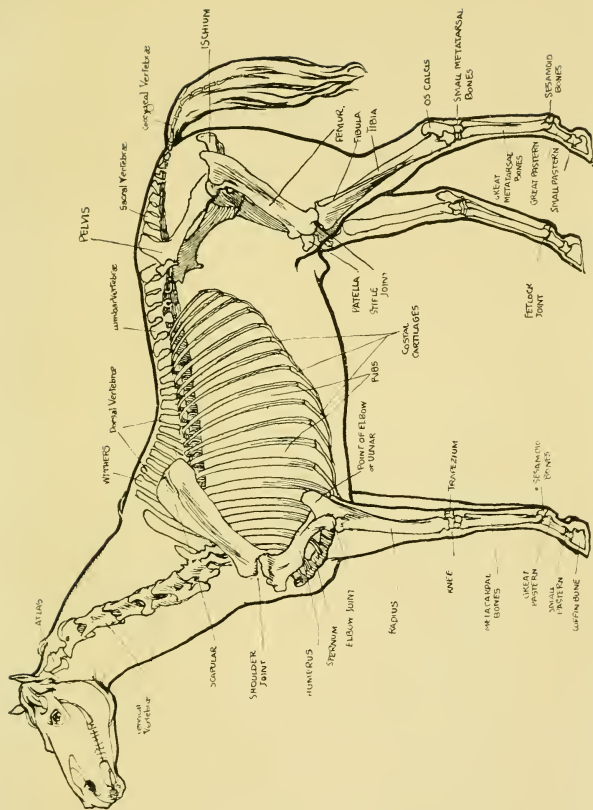
An hour's grooming is equal to an extra quartern of oats.

A horse generally requires shoeing once a month. The nails should be looked to every time before a horse does a long day's work. I always have my horse's shoes looked at before hunting, and on the only occasion I omitted this last year a shoe was wrenched off and the horse laid up for a week. The foot should be kept as much as possible the natural shape. The horse should have the shoes fitted exactly. The good blacksmith fits the shoe to his foot, the bad one fits the foot to the shoe. You can easily tell when the

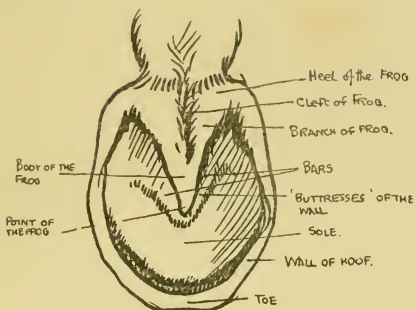
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blacksmith is careless, because the hoof of the horse shod by a bad craftsman has the marks of the rasp on the hoof.

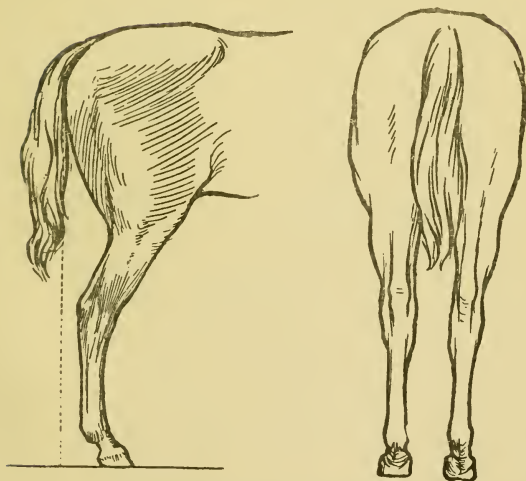
In the foregoing little book no attempt has been made at any novelty, no pretence to originality. Its virtue, if any, is that everything is the result of the personal experience of one who has always loved horses and had to consider ways and means. I have tried to put down only what I have proved to be useful, and to consider what counsels would have been most profitable to myself as a beginner in the practice of horsemanship.



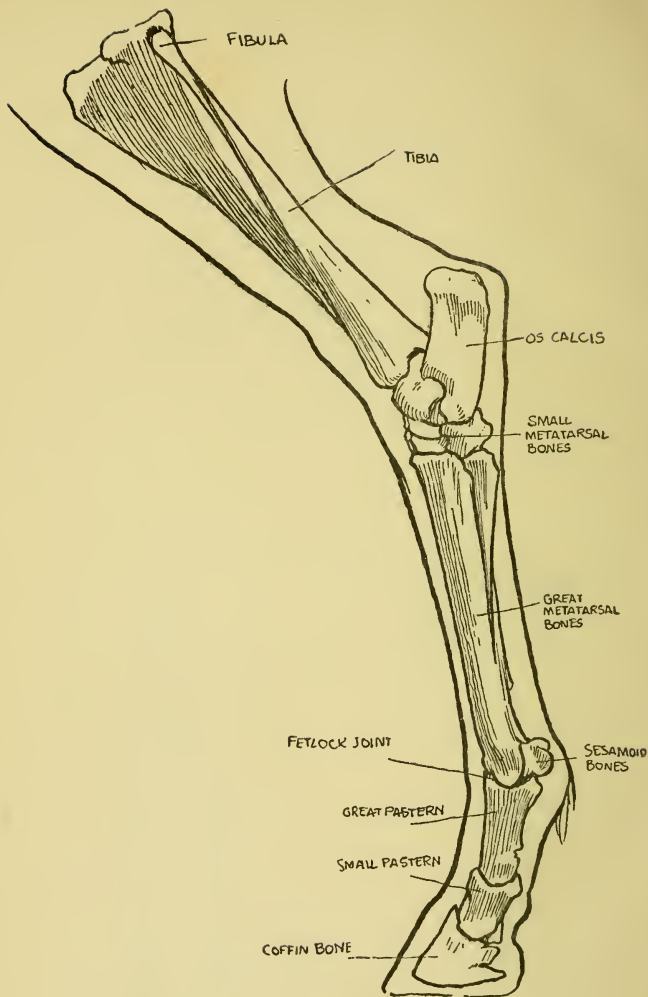
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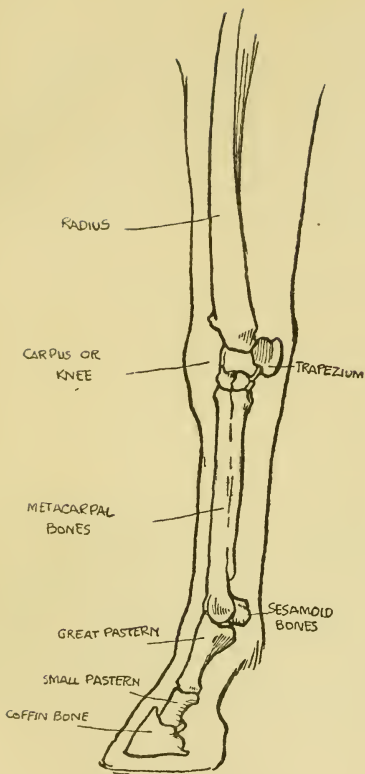
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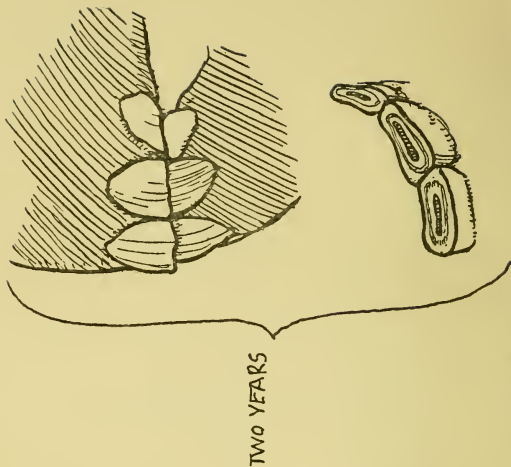
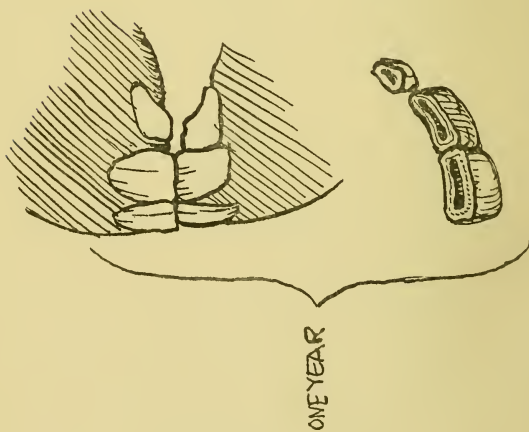
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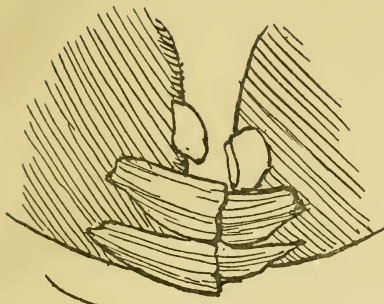


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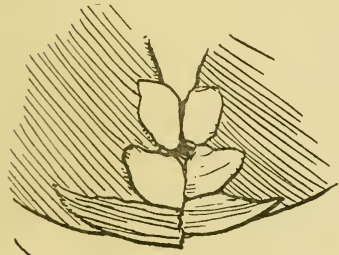


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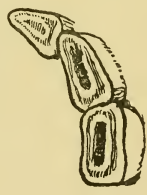




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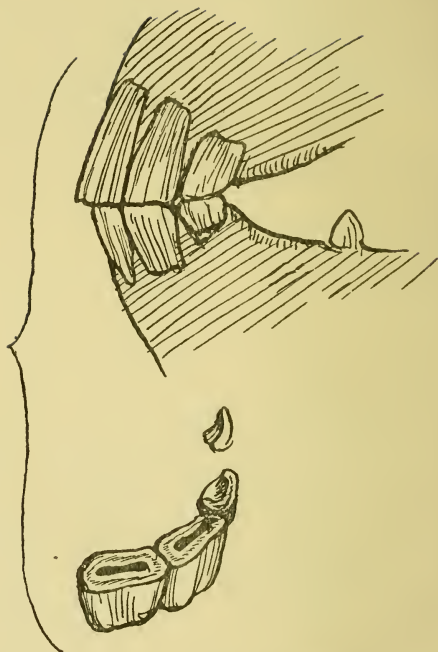


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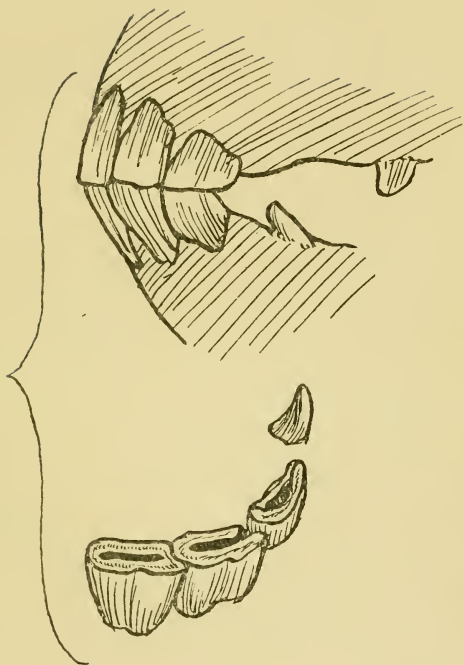
TEETH OF THE HORSE AT DIFFERENT AGES—*Continuea*

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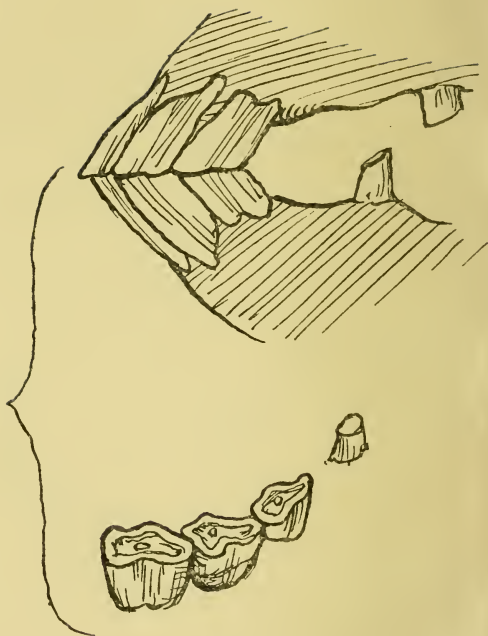
TEETH OF THE HORSE AT DIFFERENT AGES—*Continued*

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